

5

THE  
**Amorous Widow;**

OR

**WANTON WIFE.**

A

**COMEDY.**

As is is Acted at the

*Theatre Royal in Smock-Alley.*

Taken from *MOLIER* and  
*DANCOURT.*

---

By Mr. BETTERTON.

---

*What he has been, tho' present Praise be dumb,*

*Shall bappy be a Theme in Times to come,*

*As now we talk of Roscius, and of Rome.*

ROWE.

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Lovemore, *his Friend, in Love with Mr. Brittle's Wife, and endeavours to have an Intrigue with her: But the Widow courts him too.* } Mr. King.

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Jeffery. *A Servant to Cunningham, in love with Prudence.* } Mr. Watson.

Clodpole. *a simple Country Fellow, that Lovemore employs in sending of Letters to Mrs. Brittle.* } Mr. Mynit.

Merryman. *A Falconer to Cunningham, who takes upon him to represent the Vicount Sans-Tarre that is to marry the Widow.* } Mr. Sparks.

Jeremy. } Mr. Hamilton.  
Boy. } Mr. Williams.

Dramatis Personæ.

W O M E N.

Lady Laycock. *An Amorous old Widow that courts every one she can for Marriage, fancying herself so engaging, that all that see her must love her.* } Mrs. Mynit.

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Philadelphia. *A Niece to the Widow, in love with Cunningham.* } Miss Cole.

Prudence. *Maid to the Widow, Mrs. Rowley.*  
Damaris. *Maid to Mrs. Brittle, that assists her in her Intrigues.* } Mrs. Lindley.



T H E



T H E

# Amorous Widow.

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A C T I. S C E N E, *a Chamber.*

*Enter Philadelphia and Jeffery.*

P H I L A D E L P H I A.

I Should believe Mr. Cunningham very constant, if I had Faith enough to credit this Letter, *Jeffery*. What Compliments are here? But 'tis the Stile that all young Lovers write in.

*Jeff.* Pray, Madam, believe me; you know I am a Man of Integrity: I cannot dissemble. Let him write what he would: If he did not love you, do you think I'd tell you so?

*Phil.* When he has Opportunity, I confess, he says kind things to me.

*Jeff.* Take my Word, Madam, my Master is not like other Men: — Unless he loves a Lady, and loves her passionately too, he never troubles himself to compliment her much.

*Phil.* Never? Yes, *Jeffrey*; sometimes, you know, he compliments my Aunt.

*Jeff.* That's a convincing Proof of his Love to you; you cannot think him reduc'd to the Necessity of making Love to an Antiquated Piece, without Design: You know he has no other Way to obtain the Happiness of seeing you. But what shall I tell him, Madam?

*Phil.* Tell him I have receiv'd, and read his Letter.

*Jeff.* Is that all, Madam !

*Pbil.* All ! Yes ; Art thou not content with that ?

*Jeff.* Any indifferent Person that had Hands, and could but read, would have done as much as that.

*Phil.* Well ; tell him then, in time perhaps I may.

*Jeff.* My Master, Madam, can't endure to depend on a perhaps,

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* Quick, quick, up to your Chamber, Madam.

*Pbil.* What's the Matter ? Is my Aunt come hither ?

*Pru.* She's at my Heels ; Go up the Back-Stairs quickly.

*Pbil.* Farewel, Jeffery ; commend me to your Master.

[Exit Phil.]

*Jeff.* For what I beseech you ? Is not my Master bewitch'd, to court a Lady a whole Year, and she'll hardly say she loves him yet ?

*Pru.* Alas ! She's but a Novice ; let me alone with her ; I'll order the Busines so, that if thy Master be discreet, and passionate enough in his Expressions, he wins her Heart I'll warrant you.

*Jeff.* He can say nothing to her, but that damn'd Aunt of her's is heark'ning still. What Pleasure can she find in Love at Fifty ?

*Pru.* Fie, Jeffery, you must say at Five and twenty.

*Jeff.* Then she dresses herself so fantastically too, that all may see she strives to appear young in defiance of Nature : She is more gaudy in what she calls Half-Mourning, than a young Bride is on her Wedding-Day. But when shall my Master have an Opportunity to speak freely to Mrs *Philadelphka* ?

*Pru.* Mr. *Lovemore* is thy Master's Friend, and is better belov'd here than he imagines. You must persuade him to amuse the Aunt, that Mr. *Cunningham* may have Convenience to court the Niece. This old Lady of mine has languish'd for a young Husband ever since Sir *Oliver Laycock* dy'd ; But, where is the great

great Viscount Sans-Terre, thy Master told her of ?  
Methinks he's long a coming.

*Jeff.* Wou'd he were but marry'd to her. *Prudence.*

*Pru.* Whether he marries her or no, is not our  
Business, *Jeffery*: Let him but fool with her till thy  
Master has gain'd her Niece, and then our Work is  
done.

*Jeff.* We have had enough of the old Lady Lay-  
cock: Let us now talk of our own Amours. Speak,  
Dost thou love me, *Prudence* ?

*Pru.* A pleasant Question ! Do you doubt it now ?

*Jeff.* If you wou'd have me credit you, you must  
swear it.

*Pru.* Sure you are jealous *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* I know your Humour well enough: You  
love a bold audacious Fellow, that will say any thing;  
and such a-one we have newly come to Town, one  
*Merryman*, our Faulconer. I fear you'll like him bet-  
ter than you do me.

*Pru.* Oh Fool ! Why should you think so ?

*Jeff.* I have some Honour in me; but he's a Fel-  
low that has eaten Shame, and drank after it. He  
is more impudent than a Court Page ; and he'll take  
no Denial.

*Pru.* Hold your Tongue; here's my Lady.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Lady.* What Busines has *Jeffery* with you ?

*Pru.* His Master sent him to enquire, whether he  
might have leave to wait on you this Morning.

*Lady.* Yes; Tell him I expect him.

*Jeff.* He durst not come, because Mr. Lovemore's  
with him.

*Lady.* Tell them, if they please to come, they shall  
be welcome both. [Exit *Jeffery*.]

*Pru.* You see Madam what Power your Beauty has.  
Neither of them can live a Moment without seeing  
you.

*Lady.* No, they have other Busines with me, *Pru-  
dence*: They came from *Paris*, and brought a Letter  
to me from my Brother; and I believe they come for  
my Answer now.

*Pru.*

*Pru.* But does not one of 'em love you, Madam?

*Lady.* I have some reason to believe one does; Mr. Lovemore has spared no Pains to persuade me to quit my Widowhood. 'Tis a very malicious World we live in, *Prudence*; they are so apt to censure, and speak ill of any single Woman, that we ought to marry to avoid Scandal: Thou know'st, *Prudence*, Wealth is not the Thing I seek.

*Pru.* Then, Madam, your Business is done; the Viscount *Sans-Terre* shall be your Husband, Madam.

*Lady.* Ah, *Prudence*! if he were but as handsome

as —————

*Pru.* Ah, Madam, that's too much.

*Lady.* Why may not I wish for it?

*Pru.* Consider his Quality, Madam, and bate him something for that. One thing I must advise you; be not too prodigal of your Gold at first; to be liberal now and then, will be convenient, and make him kinder to you.

*Lady.* For all this, I shou'd think my self very happy: if I were certain of Mr. *Cunningham*, or Mr. *Lovemore*.

*Pru.* A little Jealousy will enflame 'em. They'll be more pressing when the Viscount comes.

*Lady.* But yet, methinks, *Cunningham* and my Niece —————

*Pru.* What, Madam?

*Lady.* Are always whispering.

*Pru.* He only compliments her, Madam. She's too young to make Love too seriously.

*Lady.* With your Favour, there's no trusting to that; To my knowledge there are those younger than she that understand what Love is but too well.

*Pru.* That's true, Madam; but *Philadelphia* is so innocent, that no Man can make Love to her, but to divert himself. Here she is, Madam.

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Lady.* What does she come for? I'll send her packing quickly.

*Pru.*

*Pru.* Consider what you do, Madam ; How can Mr. Lovemore entertain your Ladyship, unless his Friend may divert himself with rallying with your Niece.

*Lady.* For all that I cou'd wish—

*Pru.* Pray trouble not your self : Trust me, I'll watch her, Madam.

*Phil.* Will your Ladyship please to go to the India House. The Coach is ready.

*Lady.* No, I'll not go yet.

*Phil.* If you stay long, Madam. the best Goods will be sold before you come.

*Phil.* No matter : Ha ! what ails the Girl ? How strangely she looks ! Her Eyes are hardly open yet.

*Phil.* How, Madam !

*Lady.* Then her Head's dress'd awry. How it disguises her ? Lord how frightfully the looks.

*Phil.* Truely, Aunt, 'tis dress'd just as the Fashion is.

*Lady.* Fetch her Hood, *Prudence* ; I'll have her put in on till it be mended.

[*Exit Prudence, and re-enter with a Hood.*

*Phil.* I dress'd it to please no Body but my self, Madam.

*Lady.* I'll have you now dress your self to please me : Come, put on your Hood.

*Pru.* My Lady's in the right. Never was any thing more ridiculous : Here, put on your Hood, I am sure that is much handsomer.

*Lady.* Why don't you put it on ?

*Phil.* I can't endure, Madam.—

*Lady.* Do it, I say.

*Pra.* So, now it is as it should be : All modest Maids should be dress'd thus : But here's Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. Lovemore.

*Enter Lovemore, and Cunningham.*

*Love.* Your Servant, Madam ; you see how we love your Company, by giving you this Trouble in a Morning.

*Cun.* 'Tis a Happiness we are much envy'd for.

*Lady.* You are welcome, Gentlemen : Pray command this House as freely as your own.

*Love.*

*Love.* Why does this young Lady hide her Face ?  
Pray, Madam, let us see you.

*Lady.* Forbear, Sir, I beseech you : She has had the Tooth-Ach lately. If she takes off her Hood, she'll catch Cold, and bring the Pain again.

*Phil.* I thank your Ladyship for your Care of me ; not but the Pain has been gone so long, I don't fear it now.

*Love.* Nay then, we must have it off.

*Phil.* What say you, Madam, shall I pull it off ?

*Lady.* Yes, Impertinent, I see you have a Mind to shew yourself.

*Pru.* 'Tis the Nature of all young Girls to do what they are forbid.

*Cun.* I come to trouble your Ladyship for your Letter to my Lawyer ; your countenancing my Busines will be of great Advantage to me.

*Lady.* This, Sir, is what my Brother commands me : You shall see it is my delight to serve his Friends.

*Love.* Madam, you promis'd me that Honourable Title.

*Lady.* Do you, Sir, pretend to it ?

*Love* Yes, Madam, more than any one.

*Lady.* I have not much Beau'ty to boast of ; but Ver-tue, Sir, makes some amends for the Defect of the other.

*Love.* Defect ? Pray, Madam, wrong not yourself so much.

*Lady.* There are few but know a little their own Value : And though a Woman be not fam'd for a great Beauty, yet if she be agreeable, there are those will like her well enough.

*Love.* You have that in Perfection, Madam.

*Lady.* In this, Sir, I know you do not flatter me.

—*Phil.* —

*Phil.* Madam.

*Cun.* Then Madam, you like my Choice in this Suit.

*Phil.* Extremely well : Was it your own Fancy, Sir ?

*Cun.* I am not ashame'd to own it, since you like it, Madam.

*Pru.* I'll listen to them. —

He talks to her of nothing but new Fashions. You may, Madam, continue your Discourse without any Disturbance.

*Lady.* Pray, Sir, tell me freely; how old do you think I am?

*Love.* Faith, Madam, if you were not a Widow, I should think you a very Girl, scarce Twenty.

*Lady.* Now, Sir, you flatter me: You might have said Thirty. I do not love to disguise my Age.

*Love.* How! Thirty, Madam! And look so youthfully? I'll not believe it; 'Tis impossible!

*Lady.* You do not know what Misery I endur'd whilst my old Husband liv'd: The Griefs I had upon me wou'd have distract'd another Woman. Alas! Sir, 'tis not Age, but Sorrow, has broke me.

*Love.* It makes me sad to hear you tell it, Madam, and vexes me, to think any old Man should enjoy such Happiness.

*Lady.* You know not how many Tears I have shed.

*Love.* 'Tis some Comfort, Madam, to remember he did not live long with you.

*Lady.* Truly, Sir, Fifteen Years.

*Pru.* Yes; and Fifteen to that.

[*Afide.*]

*Lady.* Having been so unfortunate in a Husband, you may believe I have but little Encouragement to marry again: For I am very happy now I am alone.

*Love.* You do wisely, Madam, for she deserves not to be pity'd, that rashly runs into the same Misfortunes: And therefore you have, Madam.—

*Lady.* Nay, Sir, I have not forsworn Marriage yet.

*Love.* Pray, Madam, where do you use to walk in the Evenings? Into St. James's-Park?

*Lady.* Not very often, Sir.

*Love.* Or into the Mulberry-Garden? Is not the Wilderness very pleasant?

*Lady.* If I like my Company, Sir, I seldom dislike the Place.

*Love.* Let me have the Honour, Madam, to wait upon you thither presently.

*Lady.*

*Lady.* Not yet, Sir; after Dinner, if you please. But tell me, Sir, do you think me such an Enemy to Marriage, that were I sure a young Gentleman lov'd me, and lov'd me truly, I would be so cruel to refuse him?

*Love.* When I consider what you endur'd in Sir Oliver Laycock's Time, I think you ought to do it, Madam; and that Man's unjust, that urges you to break your Resolution.

*Lady.* Pray do not mistake me, Sir; I have made no such Resolution yet.

*Love.* Nay, Madam, since you are displeas'd with what I said, we'll change the Discourse. Pray, Madam, do you think the young Lord Lucky, has that Interest in Court that Fame says he has?

*Lady.* Lord, Sir, this is a strange wild Answer to my Question: Let me tell you, Sir, if I have any Merit, Wealth, or Beauty, there's one, Sir, in the World, that deserves 'em all.

*Pru.* Good! How she teases him! [Aside.]

*Love.* But has that one no Fault, Madam?

*Lady.* You know him very well, Sir,

*Love.* I know him, Madam!

*Lady.* Yes, you, Sir. 'Tis yourself.

*Love.* 'Sdeath! what will become of me now? [Aside.]

### Enter Servant.

*Serv.* Madam —

*Lady.* What now?

*Serv.* The Marchioness is come to visit you.

*Lady.* Troublesome Creature. Go one of you and entertain her quickly.

*Pru.* Which of us, Madam?

*Lady.* Go you, Philadelphia, and keep her Company till I come.

*Phil.* I shall, Madam.

[Exit.]

*Cun.* Pray, Madam, what is this Marchioness?

*Lady.*

*Lady.* Oh, Sir! a most eternal Talker: Her Tongue goes like the Larum of a Clock; as fast, and to the same Tune still. She's almost Sixty, and yet pretends to Beauty; and loves Courtship most unreasonably. Say but a kind Thing to her, and you win her very Heart. The Truth is, she has not much Reputation, Sir; but the Respect, I give her, is to her Quality, and not to her Person. But, she's an Original in her Kind, Sir.

*Love.* Oh blind, blind Creature! She draws her own Picture, and laughs at it. [Aside.]

*Cun.* Sure, Madam, her Conversation must be very pleasant?

*Lady.* She has been much courted in her Youth: But, 'twould make one die with laughing, to hear her boast of her Lovers, now. How this Knight sighs, and that Lord dies, for her; when all the while, I know what Necessities the poor Creature is reduc'd to. I would have brought her hither, but, that I knew we should never have been rid of her. Excuse me a Moment, I'll send her away, and return presently. Your Servant, Gentlemen. [Exit.]

*Cun.* How now, Friend.—What's the Matter, you look so sullenly?

*Love.* I play the As here any longer! No; if I do, may I turn Pudden to a Rope-Dancer, and shew my Tricks in *Bartholemew-Fair* next Year.

*Cun.* Nay, but Friend; dear Friend—

*Love.* Tell not me of Friendship. What Man would endure to be so plagu'd, as I have been. I have parry'd with my best Skill, the most dangerous Thrusts that ever yet were made at me. To tug at an Oar, or dig in a Mine at *Peru*, is Recreation to it: But the first Time to offer Marriage to me! I sweat to think of it. She made me tremble twice, for fear she should have forc'd my Neck into her mouldy Noose of Matrimony.

*Cun.* We have no other Way to blind her, Sir.

*Love.* 'Tis all one to me.

*Cun.* If thou lov'st me, Friend, do not forsake me now.

*Love.* Pray, Sir, live, if you please, and give me Leave to do so too. Should I again be left alone with her, the best I can hope for is Distraction.

*Pru.* How do you like the Niece?

*Cun.* She's all Perfection.

*Pru.* How do you thrive? Do you find her kind, Mr. Cunningham?

*Cun.* She has promis'd me a Meeting after Dinner, if thou can't but remove the Aunt from us.

*Pru.* That must be Mr. Lovemore's Work.

*Love.* My Work!

*Pru.* Yes, your's; perform your Promise, carry her this Afternoon to see *Paradise*.

*Love.* I'll sooner carry her to Hell, and leave her there. I do it! No, good buy.

*Cun.* Stay, stay, dear Friend, can you deny me when all my Happiness depends on't?

*Love.* Were it to storm a Town, to attack an Army, I durst attempt it, Sir; but for this Aunt, I dare not encounter her.

*Pru.* She will not eat you, Sir.

*Love.* Yes, but she will, and forty such as I am, for a Breakfast.

*Pru.* This Man is mad.

*Love.* So wou'd he, or any Man, that had been worry'd by her as I have been: I'll sooner be sent to the Tower, and cag'd there with the Lyon, or carry'd to the Bank-side, and be baited with Tom Dove, than be shut an Hour into a Glass Coach with this old Cormorant.

*Pru.* Would this Viscount of your's were come.

*Cun.* He'll not be absent long, the ready Money pleases him extreamly: He shall do whatever I command him.

*Pru.* Wou'd Mr. Lovemore were but as tractable.

*Love.* Well, since I am not, I'll resign my Place to him, Stay, there's an admirable Design come into my Head, just now.

*Cun.* What is it, Friend?

*Love.*

Love. Why may not *Merryman*, your Falconer,  
pass for this Viscount, Sir? No Body knows him.

Pru. Has he Wit enough to do it?

Love, He has Impudence enough, and that's as  
good.

Cun. 'Twas he, I employ'd to treat with this *Sans  
Terre*; he knows his Humour to a Hair.

Pru. Pray send for him immediately.

Enter *Merryman* and *Jeffery*.

Cun. He has prevented us. Look, there he is.

Pru. Is this your *Merryman*?

Mer. Yes, Lady, have you any Service for him?

Cun. Have you seen the Viscount, *Merryman*?

Mer. Yes, Sir, with much a-do.

Cun. When will he come?

Mer. A Week hence; or sooner if you desire it,  
Sir.

Cun. But we want a Viscount presently.

Mer. Presently!

Love. Yes, presently; couldst not thou act him,  
*Merryman*?

Mer. I act a Viscount, Sir!

Cun. Thou know'st him, *Merryman*.

Mer. Yes, perfectly, 'tis a gay jovial Blade.

Cun. What say'st thou? Wilt thou take this Vis-  
count's Name, and court this lusty Widow?

Mer. I am your Man, Sir; I'll act him to the Life  
I warrant you.

Pru. Then, without more Delay, he must, this  
Afternoon, visit my Lady, Sir, for she expects him:  
While he is entertaining her, you may employ that  
Time to meet your Mistress; but, *Jeffery* must be  
near to bring you Intelligence.

Cun. Do you hear, *Jeffery*?

Jeff. Yes, Sir, I shall observe my Orders punctually.

Cun. In the mean Time, we'll go and dress our  
Viscount *Ridicule*: If your Lady enquires after us,  
pray tell her, *Prudence*.—

*Pru.* Good Sir, spare your Advice; 'tis enough I tell her the Viscount will be here this Afternoon: Pray, be you careful, Sir, that your Man acts his Part.

*Mer.* Good Gentlewoman, meddle with your own Business: Look to your Lady's false Hair, Spanish Paper, and Mercury Water, and trouble not your Head about my Part.

*Pru.* This Fellow's conceited, Sir.

*Mer.* Not so neither; but I would have you know, I understand my Trade as well as you do yours.

*Pru.* I have given Advice to as wise a Man as you are.

*Mer.* It may be so: Then he had Wit enough not to follow it.—Let's see your Mouth, how old are you?

*Pru.* Guess.

*Mer.* Fifteen, or thereabouts.

*Pru.* This Man of your's deals with the Devil, Sir, most certainly, else 'twere impossible that he should guess so right.

*Cun.* Go, Sirrah, get you about your Business; shou'd you be discover'd now, our whole Design is spoil'd.

*Love.* Prudence, farewell.

*Mer.* Farewell, young tender Virgin, when I am a Viscount, I shall so thrum your Jacket—

*Pru.* Away, you Fool.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

*End of the first ACT.*

**ACT**

---

A C T II. S C E N E I.

*Enter Cunningham and Philadelphia.*

*C U N N I N G H A M .*

**A**T length, Madam, Fortune has been kind to me: We have no jealous Eyes to watch us now: Now I may tell you how I have languish'd for you: Tho' I hope Madam, I might spare my Language, because my Eyes have often done it for me.

*Phil.* I do not well understand your meaning, Sir, but I am bound in Generosity to wish you Happiness,

*Cun.* That Wish, Madam, was kind: But if it proceeds only from Generosity, 'twill hardly make me happy: 'Tis something more that I desire of you—'tis your Love I implore.

*Phil.* I am afraid to hear this Language, Sir, and blush to find myself alone with you; and shou'd my Aunt see us.—

*Cun.* Pray, let not that distract you, Madam, *Pru-dence* will be careful to prevent that Danger—What have you now to fear?

*Phil.* A hundred Things: The Anger of my Friends, the Reproach and Censure of the World; but above all, a Change in you: That guilty Coldness which too often your Sex returns our easy, our innocent Affections.

*Cun.* Do not injure me so much, to judge of me by others: Rather think me guilty of all you can imagine, than believe I can be false to you.

*Phil.* All Men say the same Things, their Actions only discover the Truth of their Intentions.

*Cun.* I beseech you Madam judge of me by my

*Actions; let Time convince you by a thousand Proof,  
of the Truth of my Intentions.*

*Pbil.* Alas! how easily we are persuaded to what we are desirous to believe?

*Cun.* But Madam, may I hope to obtain your Love?

*Pbil.* The Hazard I run in being here alone with you, methinks shou'd satisfy you: But Sir, you know I am at my Aunt's Disposal; my Father dying, left me to her Care; and 'till she is provided with a Husband, 'twill be in vain, I fear to ask me of her—I hear a Viscount's coming to court her, Sir; if that succeeds—

*Cun.* Then I may live in hope, and not declare my Love, before we see how she receives this Viscount?

*Pbil.* I ought to have given you only my Esteem: But if your Love be what you paint it to me, I must in Justice then grant you your Desire.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Lady.* That Painting, my fine Niece, is very pretty, that Blush becomes you too: I see your queasy Stomach's up already, and I must be forc'd to provide a Gallant for you. Very well..

*Pbil.* Madam, for me!

*Lady.* Yes, Impudence, for you! Had I not overheard the Love he made; this Hussy wou'd deny it.

*Cun.* Indeed, Madam, —

*Lady.* Go, go, you may be ashame'd, Sir, to come into a virtuous Family, to debauch an innocent young Virgin.

*Cun.* Madam, I came with no such base Intent; my End was honourable: 'Twas Marriage Madam.

*Lady* Here's none to be married, Sir, you are mistaken: Come to make Love in a Widow's Family, that's very pleasant truly.

*Pbil.* Pray, Madam, do not think —

*Lady.* Hold your Tongue, bold-face—I shall take another Course with you.

*Pbil.*

*Phil.* Very well, you must come hither to ask my Assistance, and offend my Aunt—What had I to do with your foolish Love?

*Lady.* What does the Baggage mean?

*Phil.* 'Tis not fit for me to tell it, Madam, because I know 'twill but increase your Anger: But if ever he asks me to speak for him again—

*Lady.* You speak for him! for what?

*Cun.* 'Sdeath, Madam, what do you intend to do?

*Phil.* I intend to discover all and clear myself: You see how I am chid for you: I told you before how much my Aunt wou'd be offended, if any one shou'd presume to speak of Love to her, and that she had made a solemn Resolution to live and die a Widow: But you were so importunate, you wou'd not be dey'd.

*Lady.* No, *Phil*, you are mistaken; I have made no such Resolution yet; but I confess 'tis my Design to do so.

*Cun.* Well, Madam, since all Addresses in this Kind, will but offend your Ladyship; I'll think of it no more.

*Lady.* Stay, I beseech you, Sir, be not so hasty; let *Phil* go on; I shall be abler to judge when I have heard it.

*Phil.* Well, Madam, if you are resolv'd to hear it—

*Cun.* If you have any Kindness for me, Madam, do not engage me in it.

*Phil.* Truly, Madam, I am afraid you will be more displeas'd, when you hear what he has made me promise him.

*Cun.* That's very true, I have offended you enough already; therefore, dear Madam, hear no more.

*Lady.* Yes, I will hear it, Sir; and more—I'll know hom she came to be alone with you.

*Phil.* Madam, he met me here by chance, and came—

*Cun.* Curse! say I came to rob the House, to fire the City: Tell her any Thing, I'll own it, rather than say I love her.

*Lady.* What's that he whispers to you?

*Phil.*

Pbil. He says he's ashay'd to let you hear it; but I  
must hide nothing from your Ladyship.

Cun. Well, 'tis in vain to struggle, I am caught.

Phil. The truth is, he came hither to seek you, Madam; and meeting me, he gave me a Description of I know not what pain he suffer'd for your Ladyship: and told me if I took not pity of him, and inform'd you of his Love—I started at the Word, and was extremely incens'd at him, (as you Madam instructed me) but still he prest me, Madam, and I protested (as in truth I ought) that I durst not speak to you for him, or any Man : At last he told me, he knew your rigid Temper, and therefore durst not tell you his Love directly; but begg'd that I would at a distance break it to you; well knowing, nothing but Time and infinite Courtship, wou'd prevail with one of your Wit and Beauty, Madam: At last he made such a lamentable Complaint, that (I not thinking any harm) took pity on him; and promiss'd if his Love was, as he painted it to me; I must then in Justice grant him his desire: and as I spoke, those words, you entered, Madam.

Lady. Go, get you to your Chamber.

Pbil. Your Servant, Sir.

[Exit,

Cun. I fear I am troublesome; I'll leave you, Madam.

Lady. No, stay Sir, I beseech you.

Cun. I am much ashay'd I have displeas'd you, Madam.

Lady. Indeed, Sir, I had some reason to be angry.

Cun. You had, I must confess: But now I see what an Aversion you have for Love, I'll trouble you no more.

Lady. I assure you, Sir, I have been pester'd with so many Suitors, and so much troubled to deny them too.

Cun. Nobody can be ignorant of that? 'Twas indiscreetly done, I must confess; But 'twas the Extremity of my Passion, Madam, made me commit that fault.

Lady. Why did you not address yourself to me?

Cun.

*Cun.* To you, Madam ! with what confidence  
cou'd I perfume to do it ? But, Madam, if you have  
any Esteem for me, give me leave to make my Passion  
known to *Philadelphia*.

*Lady.* We must not talk of Love before young  
Girls, they are too apt to think of it themselves ; we  
need not Sir put 'em in the mind of it ; but on the  
contrary we shou'd make Love seem monst'rous to 'em,  
tho' we know better things ourselves——not but  
there are pleasures in Widowhood, which are not to  
be found in a married Life : But, 'tis as we ourselves  
fancy it.

*Cun.* Well Madam, since you fancy it so much, I  
shall not endeavour to dissuade you.

*Lady.* Do not mistake me, Sir, I say not this, be-  
cause 'tis my intent to over value myself at all, but on  
the contrary. ——

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Phil.* The Man has brought the little Pictures,  
Madam.

*Cun.* I am oblig'd to her for this Relief : 'tis some  
Satisfaction for the Torment I have endur'd.

*Phil.* Madam, he's at the Door ; shall he come in ?

*Lady.* No, foolish Girl, let him come another time,  
must you needs trouble me now ?

*Cun.* Has he not fine Toys for a Cabinet ?

*Phil.* O yes, the prettiest that you ever saw.

*Lady.* O stupid Creature ! I'll have none of 'em :  
get you gone you officious Fool. [Exit Phil.

*Cun.* What a tormenting Creature, an amorous old  
Woman is !

*Lady.* I may Sir without Vanity acknowledge, that  
the best Part of my Time (in my Husband's Days,  
and since) has been employ'd in answering the eager  
Sollicitations of troublesome importunate young Men,  
I have been persecuted by men of the greatest quality in  
*England* : At this very instant I am press'd to receive  
the Addresses of a Viscount.

*Cun.* What Viscount, I beseech you, Madam ?

*Lady.*

*Lady.* A Man of noble Birth, his Name's well known, 'tis the Viscount *Sans Terre*, Sir— You seem disturb'd—I hope you are not jealous.

*Cun.* I can never be troubled at your Happiness.  
*Lady,* Indeed, I will not give you any Cause.—

*Enter Prudence.*

*New,* what come you hither for?

*Pru.* Madam, the Viscount *Sans Terre* is come.

*Cun.* Thanks to my Stars, now I may breath a little.

*Pru.* Never was any Thing so gallant, Madam; he's nobly attended too: He has half the Fiddles in the City at his Heels.

*Cun.* This Rogue will over act his Part, and spoil all.

*Lady.* Methinks you are melancholly.

*Cun.* I, Madam.

*Lady.* Yes, Sir, I see it well enough: Pray let it not disturb you.— Now he is come, I must receive him civilly.

*Cun.* By all Means, Madam.

*Enter Merryman with Fiddles.*

*Jeffery and Philadelphia.*

*Mer.* (Sings.) *From the North I came  
Where I heard of the Fame  
Of the Lady Laycock's Beauty;  
I had pass'd for an Ass  
Had I stay'd where I was,  
And not done a Viscount's Duty.*

By your Leave, Ladies; which of these is the Aunt? Oh! by her Age, this shou'd be she I look for. (to Phil.) Pardon me, Madam, that scurvy, that vile Word Age; to some 'tis an Affront, to you 'tis none; for you look younger than your Niece: I was told so before I came, and now I find it true.

*Phil.* What Answer shall I make him, Madam?

*Lady.*

*Lady.* You are mistaken, Sir, I am the Aunt.

*Mer.* You the Aunt! that's good i'faith—persuade me to it, if you can.

*Lady.* 'Tis true, Sir, I assure you.

*Mer.* And is this reverend Gentlewoman your Niece?

*Lady.* Yes.

*Mer.* Yes! you have a Mind to wheedle me; I am not cozen'd so easily.

*Lady.* Here's no Body intends to Cozen you.

*Mer.* Are you indeed the Aunt then?

*Lady.* Yes indeed am I, Sir.

*Mer.* I know not whether the Devil tempts me to it or no: But I cou'd wish 'twere true, for my Mouth waters after you most damnably: But deal ingeniously, which is the Original?

*Lady.* I am not much surpriz'd at your Mistake, Sir, but you are obliging, and wou'd flatter me.

*Mer.* Not I, I swear, I am in earnest, Madam.

*Phil.* This Fellow must be a Fool, else 'twere impossible he shou'd mistake so grossly.

*Mer.* If you are the Niece then, you must Veil to your Aunt for Youth and Beauty too.

*Lady.* You praise me, Sir, too much.

*Mer.* Not I, by Jupiter: Pray turn about, and let me view you round—I marry, there's a Shape for you, and such a stately Mein too.—Pray turn again, Madam: Lord! what a pretty childish Air is in that Face of yours?

*Lady.* There are those, Sir, that are worse.

*Pru.* Do you observe how witty the Viscount is?

*Lady.* Peace, *Pru.*

*Mer.* The fame of your Beauty, Madam, has brought me from the North to kiss your Hands.

*Lady.* You are too obliging, Sir.

*Mer.* I come of a very ancient Family, Madam: 'Tis true, originally we were French; the *Sans Terre* came in with the Conqueror, Madam.

*Lady.* I believe it, Sir.—You are melancholly.

[to Cun.

*Mer.*

*Mer.* He is so ; I observ'd it, Madam, and could hardly forbear laughing at him ; is he touch'd with the Spleen ?

*Lady.* You may excuse him, Sir, he's in Law.

*Mer.* In Law ! he had better better be in Purgatory. — Methinks you are disorder'd ; are you afraid I shall not like you, Madam ?

*Lady.* How, Sir !

*Mer.* Let not that trouble you ; if you like me as well as I like you, we'll be married immediately.

*Lady.* Immediately !

*Mer.* Ay, the sooner 'tis dispatch'd, 'twill be the better.

*Lady.* You must allow me a little Time to consider, Sir.

*Mer.* No, we'll have no Consideration, Widow : — I shall get such abundance of young *Sans Terre* upon this Body of yours —

*Lady.* Truly, you make me blush, Sir.

*Mer.* I love to see you blush ; it becomes you exceedingly : My Servants are a little tir'd with their Journey, a few Hours will settle them : This Evening they shall entertain you, Madam : You shall see how we spend our Time in the North.

*Lady.* Where shall it be, Sir ?

*Mer.* Here, in your Lodgings, Madam ; let me view 'em : The Order and Neatness of 'em is admirable.

*Lady.* They will not answer your Expectation, Sir.

*Mer.* Pray, let me see your Bed-chamber : I never left a Widow's Lodgings before I saw her Bed-chamber. — Come, let me Squire you, Madam.

*Lady.* Some other Time, I beseech you.

*Mer.* No, no, it shall be now : Lead Brothers of the Fiddle.

*Pru.* This is the Way, Sir.

*Lady.* This Fellow makes me mad — pray be not jealous, Sir, because I let this Viscount take my Hand. [to Cun. aside.

*Cun.* Do not wrong me so much to think so.

*Lady.* Come, *Phil.* come with me.

[*Exeunt.* SCENE

## S C E N E, Brittle's House, &amp;c.

Enter Lovemore and Cunningham.

Cun. I have had, Lovemore, a Fellow-feeling of thy Sufferings, I have been tormented worse than ever you were by that old amorous Devil.

Love. By the Aunt?

Cun. The very same: Curse on her Devilship: Nothing that's young can come amiss to her.

Love. She must have been a rare Jilt in her Youth.

Cun. But, Friend, I thought you had forsworn the House. What subtle Business brings you hither now?

Love. 'Tis Love, my Boy, I have an Intrigue here.

Cun. You an Intrigue! With whom?

Love. With pretty Mrs. Brittle, the Glass-man's Wife that's Landlord of this House.

Cun. Give you good Fortune, Friend.

Love. Damaris, her Chamber-Maid, I have already won, who gives me all the Encouragement I can wish for: She says the Husband's jealous to Distraction, and that his Wife loves Company and Courtship most extreamly.

Cun. Very well, you have Ground enough to work on.

Love. I have a Letter ready, which I must get convey'd to Damaris, she'll give it to her Mistress, and send me her Answer instantly: Shall I employ Jeffery?

Cun. Yes, there he is, he'll do't dexterously; farewell, Friend, I'll follow my new-made Viscount, while he is entertaining the old Lady, I may have an Occasion offer'd me of talking with my Mistress. [Ex.]

Love. Jeffery.

Jeff. Sir!

Love. Thou can't convey this Letter very privately?

Jeff. To one you are in Love with—Is't not so?

Love. You are in the right.

Jeff. Is she Wife, Widow, or Maid, Sir?

Love. The Truth is, Jeffery, 'tis a Citizen's fair Wife, the prettiest little Rogue —— Had she —— Jeff

*Jeff.* Do you think this Life will last for ever, Sir? Does nothing come amiss to you? Shall no Condition 'scape you?

*Love.* Good wife Jeffery, spare your Counsel, and deliver my Letter for me. — Take it.

*Jeff.* Do not trust me, Sir, I say, do not trust me, I have a damnable squeamish Stomach, and I shall spoil this bawdy Busines: Therefore do not trust me.

*Love.* What ails the Fellow?

*Jeff.* I have a Mind to marry, but I have no Mind to be a Cuckold, Sir.

*Love.* Why, thou a Cuckold, Fool?

*Jeff.* If I carry this Letter, Sir, and you make a Beast of this honest Citizen, then I am partly the Occasion on't. And, ought not I in Conscience to expect the same Return when I am marry'd, Sir? If I by Accident shou'd see a young brisk Gallant with my Wife, I shou'd presently conclude that he has done the same for me; therefore, I say again, do not trust me.

*Love.* Well, Jeffery, the Truth is, I have no such Design: I wou'd not believe thy Master, when he told me how scrupulous thou wert, and feign'd this Story for a Tryal only: Farewell honest Jeffery — [Exit Jeffery.] I had been in a very fine Condition, had I trusted this Rascal with my Mistress's Name: As sure as Fate, the Rogue wou'd have betray'd me. But, here's the Husband —

*Enter Brittle.*

Your Servant, Mr. Brittle.

*Brit.* Your Friend and Barnaby.

*Love.* Is the Lady Laycock in her Chamber?

*Brit.* Yes, Sir. [Exit Brittle.]

*Love.* I am going to wait on her — Farewell — I must employ some Fellow that is unknown to the whole Family; and now I think on't, Merryman has brought one up that never saw the Town before, a plain simple honest Fellow; Clodpale, I think, they call him; he shall deliver this Letter for me, I'll send for him, and give him Instructions instantly. [Exit. Brit.

*Brit.* These Gallants flock to this old rich Widow, and make more Noise about her, than a Kennel of Hounds about a Carcass of Carrion: My House is grown as common as the Exchange, or the Play-Houses, where all Sorts of Company meet to laugh and talk wantonly; it makes me mad, stark mad to think on't: I must marry a Gentlewoman, with a Murrian to me; and fill my House with her proud vain Kindred, that infect my Wife with their loose lascivious Principles. Well, *Barnaby Brittle*, you have no Body to thank but yourself for this: You must marry above your Quality, and now you see the Effect on't.

*Enter Mrs. Brittle.*

How now, Wife, whither away so fast?

*Wife.* I am going to *Ranelagh Gardens*, with my Cousin *Philadelphia*.

*Brit.* To *Ranelagh Gardens*!

*Wife.* Yes, and thence to see a Play, where we shall have such Sport.

*Brit.* How! Sport, Wife!—

*Wife.* 'Tis the pleasantest Thing in the whole World, to have a Flock of wild Gallants fluttering about two or three Ladies: and then, they talk to 'em most wantonly, and so loud, that they put the very Players out of Countenance.—'Tis a better Entertainment than any Part of the Play can be.

*Brit.* Pray stay a little: Why, now, is this a Dress for *Barnaby Brittle's Wife*?

*Wife.* No; but 'tis a Dress for a Gentlewoman, for Sir *Peter Pride's Daughter*, Sir: You'd have me wear a plain Bombazeen Gown, with my Set-Hood, my Pendants, and my Ear Knots hanging over 'em; or, at best, a pitiful Doyley Petticoat: I know better Things, I thank you, Sir.—Good-by, I'm afraid my Cousin stays for me.

[Going.]

*Brit.* Hold, Wife, if you please, you shall not go,

*Wife.* Indeed, Husband, if you please, I will go.

*Brit.* Truly, my pretty-fac'd Wife, I shall make you tarry.

C. 2. *Wife.*

*Wife.* Truly, my sweet-fac'd Husband, you cannot, nor you shall not.

*Brit.* Indeed, I shall.

*Wife.* Indeed, you shall not.

*Brit.* With your permission, I shall make you keep me Company this Afternoon.

*Wife.* This Afternoon !

*Brit.* Yes, this Afternoon.

*Wife.* I ask your Pardon for that, sweet Husband.

*Brit.* And I ask your's, dear Wife.

*Wife.* It cannot be.

*Brit.* It shall be.

*Wife.* No.

*Brit.* Yes.

*Wife.* I tell you, no.

*Brit.* I tell you, yes.

*Wife.* You shall not force me to't.

*Brit.* But I shall, if you provoke me.

*Wife.* Well, set your Heart at rest; I will go, and stay me if you can or dare.

*Brit.* Hast thou the Impudence to say this to my Face? Do not provoke me, do not.

*Wife.* Where's the Danger, pray?

*Brit.* Do not force me to use you worse than I intended.

*Wife.* The worst you cou'd do, you have done already, you marry'd me against my Will; and do you think I will not be reveng'd for't?

*Brit.* Hold that damnable Tongue of your's, or I shall do you a Mischief; the Devil tempts me to it strangely.

*Wife.* Do your worst, I defy you: I am a Gentlewoman on both Sides; by the Father descended from the honourable Family of the *Prides*, by the Mother from the worshipful Family of the *Laycocks*: And shall I suffer an under Citizen, a pitiful Glassman, to make a Slave of me?

*Brit.* Peace, Peace, I say.

*Wife.* 'Tis true, he's in the Road of Preferment now, he has been Scavenger, and, in Time, may come to be Church-Warden, and rob the Poor: or,

to the highest Point of Honour, to be a Common-Council-Man, and march in Triumph on a Lord Mayor's Day, or fail in a new-trimm'd Dung Boat to Westminster, almost as ridiculous and foppish as riding the Fringes.

*Brit.* Come, do not abuse the City, do not.

*Wife.* I might have marry'd a Merchant, and have had my Glass-Coach and my little Chariot, my Women and my Foot-Boys in Liveries; have had as much Plate, as good Jewels, and as rich Cloaths, as the best Lady about the Court; and did I lose all this, and marry a sneaking Glass-Man that will not allow me Christian Liberty? My Comfort is, I have Parents that will not see me wrong'd; they are now with my Cousin Laycock.—I'll to my Lady Mother, she shall know how I am us'd by you. *Exit.*

*Brit.* What shall I do?—I shall be damnably tormented with this Father and Mother of her's.—The Mischief is, when I do complain, they believe all she says, (tho' ne'er so false) and face me down that I am in the Wrong still: Then the Mother is so proud of her pragmatical Honour, (as all new-made Ladies are) and looks for so much Respect forsooth, that 'tis intollerable: If it goes on at this Rate, what will become of me? I know my Fate; there's no avoiding it, I must, next Month, take up my Habitation in Bedlam, a Judgment every Citizen deserves, that marries a Wife from between Temple-Bar and St. James's. *Exit.*

*Where daily they intrique, like wanton Jades,  
At Routs, Assemblies, Drums and Masquerades.*

*End of the second A C T.*

## A C T III. S C E N E I.

*Enter Barnaby Frittle.*

*B R I T T L E.*

W E L L Gentlefolks, of Birth and Quality, forsooth, may be fine People for ought I know: But I wish it had been high Treason for them, to marry any Body but one another: I am sure I have my Belly full of them: I have a Wife that turns up her Nose at her honest Neighbours, when they civilly call her by my Name; that thinks all my Wealth too little to purchase the honourable Title of her Husband: a Title that with all my Heart, I wou'd give double the Sum to get rid of,——My own House is a Hell to me; I never come Home, but the Devil in the Shape of some Vexation or other, is got hither before me. ——Why look, there he is now.

*Enter Clodpole.*

*Clod.* What the Devil has that Fellow being doing there?

*Clod.* How that Man eyes me!

*Brit.* I am sure he does not know me.

*Clod.* Is he not a Spy, set to Watch me? He saw me come forth from the Glassman's House, and may discover me.

*Brit.* I'll speake to him: — A good Day to you, Friend,

*Clod.* The like to you, Sir.

*Brit.* You do not dwell in this House, Friend, do you?

*Clod.* No, Sir, no; I only come to prepare an Entertainment for to-morrow.

*Brit.* For to-morrow? Tell me who makes it, will you?

*Clod.* Mum!

*Brit.* Who?

*Clod.*

*Clod.* Peace.

*Brit.* What do'st mean? Thou cam'st out of that House.

*Clod.* You must not tell it tho'.

*Brit.* Why?

*Clod.* Good Lord! because.

*Brit.* Of what?

*Clod.* Softly — I am afraid we shall be over-heard.

*Brit.* No, never fear it, Man.

*Clod.* The Business I came for, was to deliver Letter to the Mistress of that House, in the behalf of a fine young Gentleman: But no Body must know of this — you understand me?

*Brit.* Yes, yes.

*Clod.* For look you, I was charg'd not to be seen when I came forth, therefore do not discover me.

*Brit.* I warrant you.

*Clod.* I can be very secret when I am commanded, Sir.

*Brit.* Yes, yes, I find you can.

*Clod.* Her Husband, they say, is the Jealousiest Coxcomb in the whole City; so ill natur'd a Fellow, that he deserves not to have love made to his Wife. If this shou'd come to his Knowledge, Sir, he'd play the Devil, — you understand me?

*Brit.* Yes, yes, very well.

*Clod.* He must know nothing of all this.

*Brit.* No, no.

*Clod.* They'll Cozen him, and do it privately, you understand me.

*Brit.* I, I, no Body better: But what's the Gentleman's Name, Friend?

*Clod.* I can never remember these hard Names — I think he is call'd Mr. Love, — I, I, Mr. Lovemore. — He has a brave Estate in our Country, Sir.

*Brit.* O, I know him very well; he lodges at —

*Clod.* The Draper's over the Way.

*Brit.* The very same.

*Clod.* I assure you he is the honestest Gentleman I ever was acquainted with, he gave me this Piece of Gold only to carry the Letter to this Gentlewoman — truly

truly Sir, we meet with few such Jobbs as these in the Country.

*Brit.* Well, have you deliver'd it to the Lady?

*Clod.* Yes, yes, and there's one *Damaris*, a notable Girl, I warrant her; she knew my Business before I spake to her: She carry'd me to her Mistress instantly.

*Brit.* Ah! damn'd Witch!

*Clod.* In troth that *Damaris* is a very pretty Wench: the Match between us is half made, for I am willing; there wants but her Consent.

*Brit.* You'll soon have that to be sure.—What Answer made the Gentlewoman to the young Gallant's Letter?

*Clod.* She bid me tell him—Stay, can I remember it? that she was very much oblig'd to him for his Kindness to her, and desired him to appoint some Place, where they might safely meet; and be very careful that her Husband did not discover 'em.

*Brit.* O vile Woman!

*Clod.* For you must know, the Cuckold her Husband is very suspicous of her—you understand me?

*Brit.* Extreamly well.

*Clod.* In good Faith, 'twill be very pleasant; for he must know of none of their private Meetings: You understand me?

*Brit.* I, I, to a Tittle.

*Clod.* Then he will be fitted for his Jealousy: Will it not be very pleasant?

*Brit.* Yes, certainly.

*Clod.* Farewel—mum!—not a Word of this: be sure you keep this Secret from the Husband—you understand me?

*Brit.* Never doubt me.

*Clod.* For my part, I'll make as if I knew nothing of it: I can be cunning when I have a mind to it: They shall get nothing out of me, I warrant 'em—you understand me? Farewell. [Exit.

*Brit.* Good-by—Well *Barnaby Brittle*, now you find how your Wife uses you! this 'tis to marry a Gentlewoman: She may play you a thousand impudent

dent Tricks ; and her Gentry forsooth shall bear her out in't : Had she been a good honest Tradesman's Daughter, I might have taken the Liberties of the City, and have drubb'd her from *Wapping* to *Westminster* — A wicked Jade ! to promise a Meeting to a wild young Fellow, that will make no more of — O Due ! I'll not endure it ; I'll complain to her Parents instantly : Now they shall see I have Reason for my Jealousy—and here they come most opportunely for't.

Enter Sir Peter Pride and Lady.

Sir Pet. You seem disorder'd Son : Pray what's the Matter now ?

Brit. I am mad, stark mad !

Lady. Good Lord, Son, where were you bred, that you use us with no more Respect ? Is that Hat of yours nail'd on ?

Brit. Faish, Mother-in-law, I have other Things to trouble my Head withal.

Lady. Is it not possible, Son, to teach you how to behave yourself to Persons of our Quality ?

Brit. Pray Mother-in-law forbear your Instructions now.

Lady. Again ! will you never leave that ill-bred Trick of calling me Mother-in-law ? Is it not as easy for you to say Madam ?

Brit. 'Slife, if you call me Son-in-law ; I know no Reason why I may not call you Mother-in law.

Lady. Yes, there are many Reasons ; if you do not know 'em, I'll instruct you, Son : Tho' I am your Mother-in law, yet 'tis not fit for you to use that Word to a Person of my Quality ; there's a great Difference 'twixt you and me : Pray know yourself, and keep your Distance too.

Sir Pet. Enough Love, say no more on't.

Lady. Good Lord, Sir Peter, you are the strangest Man in the whole World, you make every one so familiar with you, they never give you that Respect that's due to you.

Sir Pet. Forbear your Instructions ; I have shew'd by

by several Actions of my Life, that I am not one that will lose any Thing that belongs to me; therefore, Son-in-law proceed methodically tell me the Business.

*Brit.* Well, since I must, I'll tell you methodically — *Sir Peter* —

*Sir Pet.* Softly, Son-in-law, know 'tis ill-breeding to call Parsons of my Birth and Education by their Names: To those above us we should say, to the Ladies, Madam, to the Men, Sir, short.

*Brit.* Why then, Sir, short (if you'll have it so) my Wife makes me —

*Sir Pet.* Nay, but Son, know you must not say your Wife, when you speak of our Daughter, Son.

*Brit.* Lord! will you make me still madder? Is not my Wife, my Wife?

*Sir Pet.* Yes, Son-in law, she is your Wife; but 'tis not fit you shou'd call her so: You cou'd do no more, if you were married to your Equal.

*Brit.* Puh! what a Rout, and a Fuss is here? the Devil take all Ceremonies, for the Love of Goodness lay your Gentility aside, and give me leave to speak what I have a mind to: — I tell you I am ill satisfy'd with my Marriage.

*Sir Pet.* Your Reason, Son-in-law?

*Lady.* Are you displeas'd with what you have gain'd so much by?

*Brit.* Gain'd, Madam! [since it must be Madam] What have I gain'd? 'twas well for you, you met with such a Fool, else your Gentility had been in the Mire: I am sure my Money has stopt many a Gap: that's all I gain'd by it, Madam.

*Sir Pet.* Do you think it no Advantage then to be ally'd to the honourable Family of the *Prides*?

*Lady.* And to the worshipful Family of the *Lay-cocks*? whence I Son, had the Honour to be deriv'd; a noble Family that will make all your Children Gentlemen.

*Brit.* Yes, yes, I believe my Children may be Gentlemen; for they're like to be of a Gentleman's getting:

getting: But I shall be a Cuckold, Madam, unless Order be taken speedily.

*Sir Pet.* Pray, Son, explain yourself: We will not maintain her in ill Actions: We'll be the first shall do you Justice on her.

*Lady.* Well! 'tis very strange! She was brought up with all Severity imaginable.

*Brit.* There's a young Gentleman makes love to her, and she receives his Courtship: this Gallant, under Pretence of visiting my Lady *Lazcock*, your Kinswoman, who lodges in my House, watches for all Occasions to corrupt her, Madam.

*Lady.* By this good Day, I had rather strangle her with my own Hands, than she shou'd stain the Honour of her Family.

*Sir Pet.* And I'll run my Sword thro' her and her Gallant, if she forfeits her Reputation.

*Brit.* I have told you what's past, and desire you to take it into your Consideration, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* 'Tis well known I have Courage, Son: I'll call this Gallant to account for this. But are you sure all this is true?

*Brit.* Ay, ay, too sure on't.

*Sir Pet.* Have a Care, Son, for these are ticklish Points, and ought not to be dally'd with.

*Brit.* All I have told you is a certain Truth.

*Sir Pet.* Go you, Love, and talk with your Daughter, while my Son in-law and I seek out this amorous Gallant.—[Exit *Lady P.*] Follow me, Son, and you shall see how vigorously I'll manage this Affair.

*Enter Lovemore.*

*Brit.* Here he comes. Sir, to save you the trouble of seeking him.

*Sir P.* Do you know me, Sir?

*Love.* No, Sir, not that I well remember.

*Sir P.* I am call'd Sir *Peter Pride*, Sir.

*Love.* I am glad to hear it, Sir.

*Sir P.* I am known at Court, I had the Honour in my Youth, to behave myself gallantly in the late civil Wars; I was in every Battle that was fought in the Kingdom, from *Edgehill* to *Naseby*.

*Love.*

*Love.* Very good, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* My Father, Sir *John Pride*, had the Honour to command in Person, at the famous Battle of *Lutzen*, where the great *Gustavus* fell : my Grand-father, Sir *Alexander Pride*, was so considerable in his Time, that he had permission granted him by the Parliament, to sell his Land, and follow Captain *Drake* to the West-Indies.

*Love.* Sir, I believe all this.

*Sir Pet.* Now, know Sir, I am inform'd, that you make Love to a young Gentlewoman, for whom I am concern'd, because she is my Daughter, Sir ; and this Man you see here, has the Honour to be marry'd to her : I am glad I have found you, to know of you the bottom of this Business.

*Love.* Pray, Sir, who told you this ?

*Sir Pet.* One that knows it to be true, Sir.

*Love.* Who e're reported this of me was a Rascal : Tell me his Name — I'll cut the villain's Tongue out.

*Britt.* O Lud ! what will become of me now ?

*Love.* This, Sir, you say, is the Gentlewoman's Husband.

*Sir Pet.* Yes, Sir, 'twas he made this Complaint to me.

*Love.* You, Sir ! did you ? 'Tis well you have the Honour to be related to Sir *Peter Pride*, else I shou'd teach you what it were to raise such Reports of me.

*Enter Lady Pride, Wife, and Damaris.*

*Lady P.* Well, Jealousy's a very troublesome thing : I bring my Daughter to clear herself in the Face of the whole World.

*Love.* Was it you, Madam, that told your Husband, I made Love to you ?

*Wife.* I, Sir ! pray how shou'd I tell him so ? you never spoke to me before, that I remember.

*Lady P.* Look you there ! I knew she was abus'd.

*Wife.* But since I am suspected : I will not be suspected, Sir, for nothing ; if you do Love me, Sir, pursue it, you shall find me willing to entertain you : And pray let me advise you, Sir, to teach your Servant more Discretion when you employ him next ; and when

when you employ him next ; and when you write, be-sure to send it when my Husband's absent : And when you have a Mind to Court me, Sir, you need-but come, and on my Word I will receive your Visit as I ought.

*Love.* Pray be not so hasty, Madam, you need not give me these Instructions, nor Scandalize yourself thus to no purpose : Pray Madam, who says I am in Love with you ?

*Wife.* The Company you see here : I know nothing but what they tell me, Sir.

*Love.* They, Madam, may say their Pleasures ; but you best know if once I made Love to you.

*Wife.* If you had, you shou'd have been welcome, Sir.

*Love.* Alas, Madam ! you need not be afraid of me 'tis not my Nature, to debauch young Ladies : I have more Respect for you, and more Reverence for your brave Father, and your honourable Mother, to have the least Thought of abusing you.

*Lady P.* Now, Son, do you hear this ?

*Sir P.* Are you yet satisfy'd ? What say you now ?

*Britt.* I say it is all damn'd Cunning : And since I must speak, 'tis not half an Hour since, she receiv'd a Letter from him.

*Wife.* Did I receive a Letter from him ?

*Love.* Or did I send her one ?

*Wife.* Damaris, is this true ?

*Dam.* O, Sir ! I never heard a falser Thing.

*Britt.* Hold your peace, Carrion, I know your Tricks too well : You were to have introduc'd this Gallant.

*Dam.* Who, I ?

*Britt.* Yes, Hussy, you.

*Dam.* How full of malice is this wicked World ! to suspect me for such a Thing ? Me ! who am Innocence itself !

*Britt.* Hold your Tongue, Baggage.

*Dam.* Shall I endure this, Madam ?

*Britt.* Peace ; or I shall Cudgel your Hide for you.

— You are not a Gentleman's Daughter — I may do what I will, with you.

*Wife.* This is such an Abuse, I have not Power to answer him : Well, 'tis a horrible Thing that a Husband shou'd have so little Grace to accuse his own Wife, because she does nothing to him, but what she ought. Alas ! If I am to be blam'd for any Thing, 'tis for loving him too well.

*Dam.* So it is, Madam.

*Wife.* Ay, *Damaris*, that's my greatest Misfortune : I wish 'twere in my Nature to entertain a Gallant, I were not then to be lamented so much : But to be thus wrongfully accus'd, who can endure it ? I will not tarry to be abus'd thus. [Exit.

*Lady P.* Go jealous Coxcomb, go : Thou do'st not deserve to have such an honest Woman to thy Wife.

*Dam.* No, Madam, he deserves to be made what he fears to be : Truly, Sir, I think you ought to make Love to my Mistress, if 'twere for nothing but to punish him : If I were in your Place, I am sure I wou'd ; and since he has accus'd me, do it, Sir, I promise you, you shall have my Assistance.

*Sir P.* Truly, Son, you deserve all this they threaten you with : Your ridiculous Behaviour sets all the World against you.

*Lady P.* Go, Clown, and learn to use a Gentlewoman better. Let's hear no more of such Complaints, I'd wish you. I'll follow her, my Dear, and comfort her. [Exit.

*Sir Pet.* Do, my Lady.

*Britt.* Why, this is the Devil, to be in the wrong, when a Man's in the right ; but can I get no Body to believe me.

*Love.* You see how unjustly I have been accus'd, Sir : You are a Man of Honour : I demand Satisfaction of you for this Affront I have receiv'd.

*Sir Pet.* 'Tis but just, and you shall have it, Sir. Come Son, give the Gentleman Satisfaction.

*Britt.* Satisfaction, Sir, for what ?

*Sir Pet.* For accusing him thus falsely.

*Britt.* I don't believe I have accus'd him falsely.

*Sir Pet.* That's all one, he denies it, and 'tis enough if a Gentleman unsays what he has said.

*Brit.*

Britt. Very well ! If I find him in Bed with my Wife, and he denies it, I must ask him Forgivenes : Do you mean so ?

Sir Pet. No more Delays, but do as I command you.

Britt. Um ! What will you have me do ?

Sir Pet. Trust me, you shall not do too much : First take off your Hat, for he's a Gentleman, and you are none.

Britt. 'Sdeath ! Will you distract me, Sir ?

Sir Pet. Do it, I say — that's well — Say after me, Sir —

Britt. Sir.

Sir Pet. I ask your Pardon.

Britt. I ask your Pardon.

Sir Pet. For the ill thoughts I had of you —

Britt. For the ill Thoughts I had of you —

Sir Pet. I had not then the Honour to be known to you.

Britt. I had not then the Honour to be known to you.

Sir Pet. But now, Sir, I beseech you to believe —

Britt. But now Sir I beseech you to believe.

Sir Pet. That I am for ever, Sir, your humble Servant.

Britt. How ! your humble Servant to him who wou'd make me a Cuckold, Sir ?

Sir Pet. How's this !

Love. 'Tis enough, Sir, I am satisfy'd.

Sir Pet. No, Sir, he shall say it in Form — that I am for ever your humble Servant.

Britt. That I am for ever your humble Servant.

[Exit.]

Love. I am yours with all my Heart, Sir ; and will forget what's past, I have troubled you too much : Your Servant, Sir.

Sir Pet. Sir your humble Servant. Now I hope you see my Son is match'd in a Family that will not see him wrong'd.

[Exit.]

Love. This Mistress of mine is the prettiest Rogue that ever I was acquainted with : And yet her Wit is more surprizing than her Beauty is ; to fool her Father, Mother, and Husband : to declare her Love to

me

me before their Faces, and give me Instructions how to behave myself in my Amour, is a Pleasure above Expression.

(Exit.)

*Re-enter Prudence.*

O, *Prudence*, you are an excellent Sentinel, indeed; you let the Lover be surpriz'd by the Enemy.

*Pru.* None, Sir, can prevent Destiny.

*Love.* *Jack Cunningham*, I confess is fallen into very good Hands.

*Pru.* He is so, let him get out of e'm if he can.

*Love.* And is that all the Pity thou hast for him?

*Pru.* Since you are so charitably inclin'd, do you relieve him: and for, your Encouragement, I assure you, my Lady loves not him so well as the loves you.

*Love.* Love me! 'tis impossible.

*Pru.* 'Tis true, she confess'd to me, yesterday— Why are you so thoughtful Sir?

*Love,* I am studying what horrid Crime I have committed, to make an old Woman in love with me.

*Enter Cunningham and Philadelphia.*

What, have you made an Escape at last?

*Cum.* Yes, but I fear Fortune's too kind long to continue so; but the Viscount gives us some hopes; he has been almost an hour praising nine or ten Pictures of the Aunt's own drawing; which wins her very Heart.

*Phil.* Will she not quarrel with me, for leaving her, Sir?

*Love.* She ought to be most angry with you, Sir Knight of the Enchanted Lady; for 'tis Enchantment sure to love' at fifty.

*Cun.* Very well Sir, my Time may come again to laugh at you.

*Pru.* Mr. *Lovemore* has the advantage of you, he is the Favourite, he is the best belov'd.

*Cun.* I shou'd not envy him, if *Philadelphia* wou'd pity me.

*Phil.* Were I assur'd of your Fidelity, I durst then promise you.

*Cun.* Pray, Madam, let my Friend be my security.

rity, he knows my Heart, let him be witness of our loves.

*Pru.* Come, Madam, give Mr. Cunningham your Hand.

*Phil.* I give you, Sir, my Hand, *Giving her hand* and promise you my love, on the *with some Reluctance* Condition you continue constant.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Pru.* Have a Care what you do, Sir? Here's her Aunt.

*Cun.* Fear nothing, Madam, I'll recover all: Before the Expiration of two Years, you shall have a long and dangerous Sicknes.

*Phil.* Pray, go on, Sir.

*Cun.* This Line that almost joins here to this Angle, signifies the Death of some Relation, whose Fortune you shall inherit, Madam.

*Phil.* That, Sir, is good enough.

*Cun.* But yet, you shall not long enjoy it, Madam; for this Line that joins to this Triangle, is an undoubted sign you shall suddenly change your Religion, and end your Days in a Nunnery.

*Phil.* I am apt to credit this, for my Aunt has often told me, I was so melancholy, I was fit for nothing but a Nunnery.

*Love.* Does this Line signify a religious Life?

*Lady.* What's the Business here? What are you doing with my Niece's Hand?

*Cun.* I understand a little Palmistry, and begg'd her, Madam, to let me tell her Fortune.

*Lady.* How do you find it Sir?

*Cun.* Truly, Madam, she is in great Danger of being made a Nun.

*Lady.* Then she will be too happy, Sir: I do not love to change my Religion; but if we had a Nunnery for Protestants, and I were of her Age, it should be the first Thing I would do. There's nothing but Tranquillity in a Convent, and in the World nothing but Fears and Jealousies; and too many that take Husbands, do but marry themselves to Death.

*Phil.* There are mighty Numbers then, that seek their own Deaths, Madam,

*Lady.* Who taught you to discourse of this Subject, Mistress!

*Love.* (*Afide*) I must change the Discourse.—This Viscount's Humour, Madam, pleases me extremely, he seems a very honest Gentleman.

*Lady.* He does not strain much for his Compliments; whate're he thinks, he says.

*Love.* He has quickly left you, Madam.

*Lady.* No, Sir, he's still above, admiring some little Drawings of mine: pray, Sir, do me the Favour to keep him Company a-while, and I'll come to you.

*Love.* He'll think himself neglected by you, Madam.

*Lady.* His Goodness will excuse me: speak to your Friend to take my Niece with him. [to *Cun.*

*Cun.* If thou lov'it me do not leave me. (to *Love.*

*Love.* I must, I shall be suspected if I do not.

*Lady.* *Phil.*, bear Mr. Lovemore Company a-while,

*Phil.* Lord, Madam, shall I be left alone with him?

*Lady.* You are wond'rous scrupulous: No, Prudence shall follow you.

*Cun.* What will become of me now? I shall be teaz'd to Death. [Exceut all but *Cun.* and *Lady.*

*Lady.* Are you not pleas'd, Sir, to see me shift 'em off, that I may be alone with you?

*Cun.* What will the Viscount, or your Niece think of it?

*Lady.* Alas! She's an innocent Girl, that understands nothing; and for the Viscount, I made my Excuse to him, Sir, when I left him: But if it be a Fault, you ought to pardon it, since my Love to you made me commit it.

*Cun.* Madam—

*Lady.* You have shew'd such Candour in your Proceedings, and join'd such Honesty with your discreet Passion, that tho' Widowhood be very pleasing to me, yet I shou'd myself be ungrateful now, to keep you longer in despair: throw off your Melancholly; I knew

know your Mind, Sir, you wou'd marry me; I give you my Consent—Now are you pleas'd?

*Cun.* Alas! this might have rais'd me to the highest Pitch of Happiness, But when you are so generous, shall I be ungrateful? The Viscount *Sans Terre* loves you; and can I without a Crime deprive you of that Honour?

*Lady.* I fear'd Sir, you were jealous: but to cure you; know I intend to marry my Niece to the Viscount: He will not have much Cause to complain, for she is young and handsome enough for a Wife: You are discreet, and may persuade her to't: Do it, and you shall see I will not retard your Happiness: I love you, Sir, and am resolv'd we'll be privately marry'd to morrow Morning: No-body shall know of it, but *Prudence*, her I dare trust.

*Cun.* To-morrow Morning! 'Sdeath, how shall I escape her now? Oh!

*Lady.* Why do you sigh, Sir?

*Cun.* Ah Madam! why did you not tell me this Yesterday? My Love had then scrupled at nothing; nor had *Lovemore* then discover'd his.

*Lady.* Why, does your Friend love me, Sir,

*Cun.* Madam, he dies for you,

*Lady.* Truly, Sir, you surprize me: how long have you known it?

*Cun.* Too soon for my Quiet, and too late to be avoided now: You may remember, Madam, he came into your Closet lately, and seeing the Viscount with you, he started suddenly, and was so much disorder'd, all took Notice of it, he ask'd me privately, if he pretended to your Ladyship: And when I told him that he did: He cry'd I am the most unfortunate of Men: I love her, Friend, more than I love my Life; and if thou do'st not find some Means to sustain my dying Hopes, henceforth expect to see thy Friend no more: At this I could not forbear fighing, nor telling him we were equally unfortunate; for I was your Adorer too; and that you were acquainted with my Flame: Then you have prevented me, says he; may you be happy in each other; and fear not me; for I will

will die a thousand Deaths, rather than complain, or confess I love her : then struggling with his Passion, he left me, and mixt himself with the Company.

*Lady.* Truly, Sir, it rejoices me to find there is so much Friendship, and so much Love and Honour, still in the World : I'll warrant you I draw this Secret from him.

*Cun.* All your Endeavours, Madam, will be fruitless.

*Lady.* Well, Sir, whether I am destin'd for you or him, I am resolv'd my Niece shall marry this Viscount —here he is,

*Enter Merryman, Philadelphia, and Prudence.*

*Mer.* How, Madam ! Are you alone with this young Gallant ?

*Cun.* I met her here by Accident.

*Mer.* The Devil you did : I find these splenetick Men when the Fit's off, are madder after a handsome Woman, than we that are always in a good Humour : Well, Madam, take your Course, we shall see who will repent it first.

*Lady.* Ah, *Prudence!* I long to be alone with thee : I have something of that Consequence to tell thee —

*Mer.* What always whispering to your Confident ! the Devil's in that Man that confides much in a handsome Woman : They value their Beauties by the Multiplicity of their Servants : I fear you are of that Humour, Madam : You eye that young Spark so much.

*Lady.* Indeed, you wrong me, Sir.

*Mer.* Those Eyes of yours, *Lady Laycock*, have a pretty kind of I-know-not-what in 'em : A certain Sweetness that is so savoury to me ; that I cannot look on 'em, but my Stomach heaves, and my Heart goes a-pit a-pat ; pray —

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.* My Lord, your Servants bid me tell you they have prepar'd what you commanded 'em.

*Mer.*

Mer. 'Tis for your Entertainment my fair Mistress.  
Go bid them enter.

Lady. Prudence, seek out Mr. Lovemore, and bring  
me Word where I may speak with him conveniently :  
What are you saying to my Niece Mr. Cunningham ?

Phil. Why, Madam, he desires me —

Lady. What, Phil !

Cun. To walk a Turn or two in the Garden with  
me ; and she's so nice, Madam to deny me.

Lady, If that be all, you may go with him, Phil.

[Exeunt.]

Mer. A ha ; I smell the Knavery, he loves you,  
and dares not declare his Passion before me : and  
now is gone to acquaint your Niece with it : 'Tis ve-  
ry well —

Lady. Indeed, my Lord, you are too suspicious.

Mer. I cannot be too watchful, they would not  
leave us without Design.

Lady. I assure your Lordship he has been praising  
your Person and good Qualities.

Mer. He must be damnable ill-natur'd, if he did  
not : Ah Widow ! if thou knew' st all my Virtues —  
What, are they gone ? Come, Madam, i'faith, we'll  
after 'em, and spoil their Sport. — [Exeunt]

*End of the third A C T.*

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## A C T IV. S C E N E I.

*Enter Clodpole and Damaris.*

*D A M A R I S.*

I Guest at first this Busines came from you.

Clod. In good Faith, *Damaris*, I only spoke two  
or three Words to a Man that saw me come out of  
your

your House, to desire him not to speak of it, and he betray'd me: Your Neighbours are horribly given to Prating.

*Dam.* Mr. Lovemore made an excellent Choice when he pickt you out for his Ambassador; he's like to make a successful Treaty on't.

*Clod.* Hereafter I'll be cunninger, and take more Care.

*Dam.* Indeed, 'tis Time.

*Clod.* Prithee no more of that: Hear me a little.

*Dam.* What shou'd I hear?

*Clod.* Turn thy Face towards me.

*Dam.* Well, Sir, what now?

*Clod.* Damaris, Mistress Damaris.

*Dam.* What ail'st thou?

*Clod.* Canst thou not guess what I wou'd say to thee?

*Dam.* No, by my Troth, not I.

*Clod.* Why then, I love thee, *Damaris*.

*Dam.* Indeed!

*Clod.* Yes, indeed, do I, or the Devil take me—I hope you'll believe me when I swear?

*Dam.* In good Time.

*Clod.* I never look upon thee, but my Heart jolts in my Stomach, like a Cart in an uneven Way.— You understand me.—

*Dam.* An excellent Simile!

*Clod.* What do'st thou do to make thyself look so prettily?

*Dam.* No more than others do.

*Clod.* We won't make much a-do about this Busyness; but if thou wilt marry me— [Goes to kiss her.]

*Dam.* Stand off, or I shall box you.

*Clod.* Cruel, savage, barbarous, inhuman Creature!

*Dam.* Be gone, and tell him, I'll deliver his Letter carefully.

*Clod.* Farewell Flint, Pebble, Rock, Marble, or any Thing that's harder. [Exit.]

*Dam.* Here she comes, with her Husband—I must hide myself 'till he is gone. [Exit.]

[Enter]

*Enter Brittle and Wife.*

*Brit.* No, no, Madam, I am not so easily de-  
ceiv'd; I am sure the Complaint I made was very  
true: I have better Eyes than you imagine, and can  
see through all your Disguises, Mistrefs.

*Enter Lovemore behind.*

*Love.* Yonder she is, how prettily she looks!—  
'Sdeath, there's her Husband.

*Brit.* I find how little Respect you have for the sa-  
cred Knot that ties us.—Nay, leave your impertin-  
ent Courtesing; that's not the Respect I am talking  
of: Therefore, do not make Sport with it.

[*Lovemore makes Love to her, by Signs, behind her Husband's Back, which she returns.*

*Wife.* Pray, what do I make Sport with?

*Brit.* I see it well enough—Look there—I know  
you stand upon your Gentility, and think me much  
below you—Again—No more of this Foolery—The  
Respect I meant, was not to my Person, but to the  
sacred Tye of Matrimony—Ah! you need not shrug  
up your Shoulders—"Tis no slight Thing as you make  
it, Mistref.

*Wife.* I shrug up my Shoulders!

*Brit.* I saw you well enough: I tell you again,  
Marriage is a sacred Thing, and ought to be more  
esteem'd with you than it is: "Tis a burning Shame  
you shou'd abuse it so; (do not toss your Head, nor  
make Mouths at me, do not.)

*Wife.* I know not what you mean.

*Brit.* You mock me, because I was not born a  
Gentleman; but we have no Whores in our Family;  
the *Brittles* were always counted honest.

*Love.* If he shou'd catch me here, I shou'd spoil  
all: I find by the Signs she makes, she'd have me  
gone—"Tis the prettiest, wittiest Rogue, in *Christen-*  
*dom.*

[*Afside.*

*Wife.* Prithee, Dear, be not so jealous of me.

*Brit.* Pray, mend your Manners then.

*Wife.* You shall, Love, allow me a little Freedom,  
indeed you shall: What Harm is it now-and-then to  
take the Air in *Hyde-Park*, in my Lady *Laycock's*  
Coach;

Coach; to go with 'em to a Play, or a Ball? Alas! I mean no Harm.

*Love.* She waves her Hand to have me gone; if I stay longer now, I shall offend her. [Aside.]

[Exit, making a Noise, in shutting the Door.

*Brit.* Ha! what Noise was that?

*Wife.* You are afraid of your own Shadow, are you?

*Brit.* Here you suffer a wild young Fellow to come after you.

*Wife.* Is it my Fault? What wou'd you have me do?

*Brit.* I wou'd have you do as an honest Woman shou'd do, that means to please no Body but her own Husband: I am sure no Gallant follows any Woman long without Encouragement: There is a certain Wantonness in the Face, with languishing Eyes, and dying Looks, which draws 'em as a Honey-Pot draws Wasps. But modest Women send 'em away quickly.

*Wife.* Why shou'd I send any Gentleman away? I think it no Scandal, nor am I offended with any Man that thinks me handsome, no, on the contrary, I am pleas'd with it.

*Brit.* And what Part plays the poor Husband, when the Wife loves Courtship?

*Wife.* The Part of an honest Man, that's glad to see his Wife so considerable, to gain the Esteem of such fine, such well-bred Gentlemen.

*Brit.* Your Servant, Madam, that won't do my Business: The *Brittles* never yet were accustomed to that Mode.

*Wife.* But the *Brittles* may accustom themselves to it, if they please: For my Part, I declare it publickly; I have no Design yet to renounce the World, to be bury'd alive with a Husband: Do you think because we are marry'd, we must instantly break off all Commerce with the Living, and be dead to all the Pleasures of the World? No, no, the Tyranny of Husbands is intollerable: To think we should die to all others, and only live to them? I do so! No; I am resolv'd, I will not die so young,

*Brit.*

*Brit.* Do you remember the Promises you made me in the Church?

*Wife.* I made none willingly, you forc'd them from me. You ask my Consent if I wou'd marry you? No; you only ask'd my Father's and Mother's; and you'd do well only to complain to them of the Wrong which may be done you; and since I never told you, I wou'd marry you, and you did it without consulting me, I do not think myself oblig'd to be your Slave, still subject to your Will: No, I am resolv'd to live pleasantly whilst my Youth lasts, and take all Liberty my Age requires: I'll see the World, have the Pleasure to be courted as well as others are: Prepare yourself henceforth to suffer it, and thank Heaven if I do no worse.

*Brit.* Very fine! I am your Husband, and tell you, I do not understand such vile lewd Doings.

*Wife.* And I am your Wife, and tell you, I do understand 'em, and mean to practice 'em.

*Brit.* She is so wickedly provoking, that if I stay any longer, I shall certainly do it. [Exit.]

*Enter Damaris.*

*Dam.* Ah, Madam! I was impatient 'till he was gone, that I might deliver this Letter to you.—You know from whom it comes.

*Wife.* Give it me, *Damaris*.

*Dam.* I find he understood your Meaning, Madam.

*Wife.* Ah, *Damaris!* how rarely this Gallant expresses himself in this Letter? Well, these Courtiers, in their Discourse, their Writings, and their Meins, have a strange agreeable Air: what pitiful Creatures these Citizens are to 'em?

*Dam.* I believe the *Brittles* have not pleas'd you much, since your Acquaintance with these Gentlemen.

*Wife.* Stay here, I'll write an Answer, and return instantly. [Exit.]

*Dam.* I need not bid you give it an agreeable Air.

*Enter Lovemore and Clodpole.*

Truly, Sir, you employ a very prating Messenger.

*Love.* I durst not send a Servant of my own, for Fear of a Discovery: But thou, dear *Damaris*, hast oblig'd me, and I'll be grateful to thee.

*Dam.* By no means : I have done nothing but what your Merit, will extract from every one : But if it lies in my Power, to do you any further Service, Sir, be pleas'd to command me freely.

*Love.* Hast thou given my Letter, to thy Mistress ?

*Dam.* I have, and she is gone to answer it.

*Love.* Is it not possible to speak with her now ?

*Dam.* Yes, Sir, her Husband's abroad : Follow me, I'll bring you to her.

*Love.* But will she not be angry, *Damaris?* Or may not her Husband return, and surprize me with her ?

*Dam.* She's more afraid of her Father and Mother : If she can conceal it from them ; she fears no body else.

*Love.* On then, I will be wholly led by thee. [Exit.

*Enter Brittle.*

*Britt.* Oh, here's my Man again ; wou'd, I cou'd get him to Witness what he told me, to my Father and Mother-in-Law ; perhaps they wou'd believe him, tho' not me.

*Clod.* Aha, Mr. Babler ! are you there ? You cannot hear a Secret, but you must be prating ; must you ?

*Britt.* Who, I.

*Clod.* Yes, you ; you told the Husband all, and made such a stir, that no body cou'd endure the House for you : I am glad I know what a long Tongue you have. I'll trust you with no more Secrets, I warrant you.

*Britt.* Nay, but Friend —

*Clod.* If you had held your Tongue, I cou'd have told you what they are doing now ; but for a Punishment, you shall get nothing out of me — You understand me ?

*Britt.* Nay, prithee let me know.

*Clod.* No, no ; you see what 'tis to be a Pratler : You shall know nothing by me, I assure you,

*Britt.* Stay, stay a little —

*Clod.* No.

*Britt.* I'll speak but one Word to thee —

*Clod.* No, you'd fain get something out of me — but you are cozen'd now — You understand me ?

*Brit.*

*Britt.* 'Tis about something else I'd speak to thee—

*Clod.* I know your Busness well enough: You'd have me tell you, that the young Gentleman, gave Money, to *Damaris*, and that she carry'd him, to her Mistres instantly: But I am not such an Afs, I warrant ye.

*Britt.* Nay, prithee hear me.

*Clod.* No.

*Britt.* Come, I will give thee—

*Clod.* But I will not take it—You understand me?

[Exit.]

*Britt.* Ha! I could not make the use I intended of this simple Fellow, but something scap'd him, that may do as well: If I could but bring the Father and Mother, to see their Daughter, private with her Gallant; why certainly they woud believe their own Eyes—But stay—how shall I be sure he's with her! If I go in, I shall fright him away; and my saying afterwards I saw him with her, nay, my swearing it, signifies nothing: And nothing, I see myself will be believ'd: They'll say, I dream't so; for my impudent Wife, will certainly face me down in it: And shou'd I fetch her Parents, and the Spark shou'd be gone before they come, why that will be the same Thing: What shall I do? Adad, this is a very hard Circumstance; that a Man shall be sure he's a Cuckold, and no body believe it but himself: 'Tis not so with my Neighbours—for now, if you step into *Change-Alley*, you'll see a thousand honest Fellows there, that every body believes to be Cuckolds, but themselves—Hold, I have it—I'll steal in softly to see if he's with her still—(*peeps through the Key hole*) Ah, lack-a-day! O! 'tis too true, I see him through the Key hole! Ah, shameful Jade! She'll certainly come to the Gallows—and here come her Parents, the very Judges that are to Condemn her—

Enter Sir Peter Pride, and Lady.

—O, Sir! I cou'd not be believ'd to day: Your Daughter carry'd it swimmingly then; but now 'tis in my power to prove it to you.

*Sir P.* What, Son-in Law, are you at this again?

*Britt.* Yes, Sir, and had never more reason for't.

*Lady P.* I protest, Son, you break my Head, with these foolish idle Stories.

*Britt.* Your Daughter, Madam, does what is worse to mine.

*Lady P.* Will you never leave these extravagant Complaints?

*Britt.* No, Madam, not 'till I can leave a dishonest Wife.

*Lady P.* Learn to speak better of our Daughter, I'd wish you.

*Sir P.* Learn to use better Language, Son, lest you repeat it.

*Britt.* Methinks, you might give the Loser leave to speak.

*Lady P.* Remember, you have marry'd a Gentlewoman.

*Britt.* I do remember it, Madam, to my grief.

*Sir P.* Then, remember to speak of her, with more Respect.

*Britt.* Yes, if she'd use me with more honesty : Because she's a Gentlewoman, she may make what Monster she will of me, and I must not say my Eyes are my own, nor dare to complain of it.

*Sir P.* What wou'd you say? Did she not this Morning tell you, she knew not the Man you accus'd her of?

*Britt.* Yes, but what will you say, Madam, if I shew you this Gallant and she together?

*Lady P.* Together! where?

*Brit.* Here, Madam, in my own House.

*Lady P.* If what you say, be true: I'll tear her Eyes out.

*Sir P.* Yes Son; for nothing's dearer to me than the Honour of our Family —— if you can prove this, we'll renounce her, and leave her to your Chastisement.

*Brit.* Pray, follow me.

*Lady P.* Take heed you serve us not such another Trick as you did to Day.

*Brit.* Lord! I say, do you follow me (*Exeunt.*)

Love.

S C E N E   *Draws.*

Lovemore, Mrs. Brittle, and Damaris discovered; Sir Peter, Lady Pride, and Brittle Enter softly behind.

*Brit.* Look there, now, Madam; have I told you true?

*Wife.* Alas! Sir! I am afraid of being surpriz'd; we must be very careful.

*Love.* Then, Madam, give me leave to wait on you this Night.

*Wife.* If you will come when all are a sleep, I'll try what I can do.

*Dam.* Madam, we are undone! Your Father, Mother, and Husband are all here.

*Love.* 'S Death what shall we do?

*Brit.* Let's steal behind them and over-hear 'em.

*Wife.* Trust me, and be not surpriz'd, what e're I say or do——— what, you put a Trick upon me to Day, did you? You dissembled your Passion? They told me, indeed, you were in Love with me, and had designs upon me: I thought I said enough then to make any honest Man ashamed of such wicked Courses; then you deny'd it confidently: And have you the impudence to come the very same Day to my House, to tell me your foolish Love, and idle Stories, to persuade me to Dishonesty; as I were a Woman that wou'd abuse so good a Husband, or Violate the Rites of holy Wedlock.

*Love.* What have I done that you shou'd wonder at? Heaven be praised, Madam, we live in an Age, when 'tis not look'd on as a Miracle, to see a Gentleman make Love to a handsome Lady.

*Wife.* You thought because I rally'd with you to Day, I might be wrought to any Thing: No, Sir; I am no such Woman: My noble Parents bred me virtuously: If my Father knew this, he'd make you repent this bold Attempt: But honest Women hate much Noise, I will not trouble him; you shall find (for all I am a Woman) I have Courage enough to revenge the Affront offer'd me, myself: You have not done by me like a Gentleman, nor will I use you like one.

[Snatches Sir Peter Pride's Stick, and beats Brittle instead of Lovemore, who slips behind Brittle.]

*Love.* Hold, hold, Madam.

*Dam.* Beat him soundly, Madam.

*Wife.* As you like this, Sir, you may come again.

*Dam.* Look, Madam, who are here.

*Wife.* My honourable Father!

*Sir Pet.* Yes, Child, my Heart leaps for Joy at what I have seen; thy Wisdom and thy Courage shew what Family thou comest from: Let me embrace my Girl.

*Lady P.* Come hither, Child — I cannot chuse but weep for Joy, to see thee so like myself.

*Sir Pet.* Methinks, Son, you shou'd be extasied at what you have seen: I confess you had Reason to be alarm'd: But now all your Suspicions are removed.

*Lady P.* Truly, Son, I think you ought to be the most contented of all Mankind.

*Dam.* Yes, certainly, Madam, he is but too happy in a Wife: He ought to kiss the very Ground she goes on.

*Brit.* Ah Traytress!

*Sir P.* What's that? Why don't you, Son, thank your Wife for her Kindness?

*Wife.* No, Sir, it needs not, he has no Obligations to me: What I did was in Kindness to myself.

*Lady P.* Whither art thou going, Child?

*Wife.* To my Chamber, Madam, that I may not be oblig'd to receive his unwilling Compliment [Exit.]

*Dam.* Truly, Madam, she has reason to be angry: Such a Wife as she is, ought to be ador'd. [Exit.]

*Brit.* Hold your Tongue, you damn'd demure Jade.

*Sir Pet.* She cannot but resent your unkindnes to her: But now all will be well, your Fears are ended: Go, go, excuse yourself, and be Friends with her.

*Lady P.* You ought to consider she's a young Woman, Son, that has been virtuously bred, and not us'd to be suspected for such vile Actions: I am almost ravish'd to see those Disorders at an end by her discreet Management of this Business.

*Brit.*

*Brit.* I see I might as well hold my Tongue, for I am sure to get nothing by prating: I had as good sit down, and comfort myself with the old Hope, that when it is at the worst it will mend. Come! who knows, the Time may happen she'll be at it again: The Devil may fail her if she trusts him too often;— Ah! dear Fortune! let me but be sure to prove myself a Cuckold, and I shall be contented. [Exit.]

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* My Lady presents her humble Service to you, Madam, and commanded me to tell you, the Viscount treats her with a Ball to-Night: And she desires Sir Peter, your Ladyship, and Madam Brittle, your Daughter, to honour her with your Companies.

*Lady P.* Pray return our humble Services to her, and let her know we will not fail to wait upon her Ladyship: Indeed *Prudence*, my Lady *Laycock* is the best bred Gentlewoman in the whole City; she was always kind to her Relations: We have been merry when my Brother Sir *Oliver* was alive.—Come, Love, shall we be going? [Exit *Sir Peter and Lady*

*Sir Pet.* Ay, my Lady. *Pride.*

*Love.* Is she indeed related to your Lady?

*Pru.* Yes, indeed, Sir *Oliver Laycock* was her Brother.

*Love.* Was there ever such a Family of Fops?

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Pru.* Peace—here's my Lady.

*Lady.* Where have you left my Niece, Sir?

*Love.* I left her in the Garden with the Viscount: His Jealousy made him very pleasant, Madam.

*Lady.* Who is he jealous of?

*Love.* He's jealous of my Friend, *Jack Cunningham*: Shou'd he come hither now, I'm afraid he'd be the like of me?

*Lady.* Perhaps he wou'd have more occasion for't.

*Love.* What say you, Madam?

*Lady.* I find you can be very secret, Sir.

*Love.* In what, I beseech you, Madam?

*Lady.*

*Lady.* Be not so much surpriz'd: I saw it well enough before, but you, Sir, know our Sex does not permit us—

*Love.* Permit you, to do what?

*Lady.* Well, they may talk what they please of Women; but when you Men resolve to dissemble a Passion, there's none of us comes near you.

*Love.* What the Devil does she mean? Perhaps she has discover'd the Intrigue I have with pretty Mrs. Brittle: Why should I disguise my Passion, Madam?

*Lady.* Indeed you have little reason for't, considering the Flame is honourable.

*Love.* I am at a Loss again: Good Madam, speak that I may understand you: I have no Flame, nor Fire, nor Smoke for any one; I am sure none that is very honourable.

*Lady.* Why, Sir, Do you not love me, then?

*Love.* I love you, Madam!

*Lady.* Yes, you, Sir; have I found you?

*Love.* If one can love, and not know it himself? then, Madam, I confess.

*Lady.* This is too much: But I was told before that no Man can disguise his Thoughts more artful than Mr. Lovemore can.

*Love.* Of whom had you this mighty Secret, Madam?

*Lady.* Of one that knows your very Thoughts, your Friend:

*Love.* Jack Cunningham!

*Lady.* The same—he told me too how generous you were; that you resolved rather to pine and dye, than to destroy his Hopes.

*Love.* Believe me, Madam, he abuses you.

*Lady.* I, I, he told me you wou'd say so: But I—

*Love.* You laugh now, Madam: But if what I say be not a real Truth—

*Lady.* Had he not told me of your Love, this Obstinacy of yours would have betray'd it: The very Disorder you are in discovers it too plainly to have me doubt it now.

*Love.* Well, you may say your Pleasure, Madam; but a Curse on me, if ever I lov'd you in my whole Life.

*Lady.*

*Lady.* Not love me?

*Love.* No, Madam, nor ever intend it, that's the Truth on't.

*Lady.* Shou'd a Stranger hear this, he'd think you very rude.

*Love.* What the Devil shall I do with her? She sticks like *Hercules's Shirt*. When *Cunningham* discover'd my Love to your Ladyship, did not you speak of Marriage to him, Madam?

*Lady.* Yes, Sir, but he valu'd your Satisfaction too much to give his Consent to it.

*Love.* Nay, then my Wonder ceases, and I forgive him freely for putting this Trick on me.

*Lady.* I hope he's not marry'd already, Sir.

*Love.* No, Madam, but —

*Lady.* But what?

*Love.* I dare not tell it, Madam.

*Lady.* Let me beseech you, Sir.

*Love.* Shou'd he know it, he'd hate me for't.

*Lady.* Believe me, Sir, he shall never hear it, from me.

*Love.* Well, I will trust you: The Truth is, he your Nephew, Madam.

*Lady.* My Nephew, Sir!

*Love.* Your Brother that's at *Paris*, in his Youth fell in Love with a Woman of Quality, one of the greatest Beauties in all *France*; she has been dead some Years, but her Name's well known, 'twas *Madam D'Olonne*; by her he had this Son, that takes the Name of Mr. *Cunningham*.

*Lady.* 'Tis very strange! But do you not love me then.

*Love.* If I say I cannot, I hope Madam, you will not think me rude for speaking Truth: But my Friend loves you to Distraction, and the Nearness of his Relation to you makes him desperate: Here he is: Remember your Promise, Madam.

*Enter Cunningham.*

Had you no Body to put your Tricks upon but me? Farewell, Sir, I hope I am even with you —  
Your Servant, M<sup>r</sup> dam.

[Exit  
*Cun*

*Cun.* What the Devil does he mean by this ?

*Lady.* Truly, Mr. Cunningham, 'twas not well done to abuse your Friend.

*Cun.* I did not abuse him ; I told you he would deny it, Madam.

*Lady.* Come, leave dissembling, Sir ; I know the Secret, and do forgive you too ; provided you pardon your Friend for telling it me.

*Cun.* What has she told you Madam ?

*Lady.* Let this stop your Mouth, you know Madam D'olonne, do you not ? O, does it startle you ?

*Cun.* Lovemore has fitt'd me indeed : I know not what Story he has told her, and I cannot imagine what Answer I shall give her.

*Lady.* My Brother need not be ashame'd to own it ; she was a handsome Lady, and you are a very hopeful Gentleman.

*Pru.* Is Mr. Cunningham your Brother's Son ?

*Lady.* I might have guest at it by my Brother's Letter, he writ so kindly of him : You are troubled Sir to think the Nearness of your Relation to me, shou'd take away your Hopes of marrying me.

*Cun.* This was wittily invented of the Rogue, and I'll pursue the Hint : Well since he has discover'd me, I will confess it, Madam, and that I feign'd the Story of his Love to keep myself unknown.

*Lady.* That was unkindly done ; but I forgive you, and am o'erjoy'd to know you are my Nephew : Let me embrace you Sir.

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Phil.* How's this ! can my modest Aunt, that is so severe upon others, embrace a Man, and never blush at it ?

*Lady.* Sure 'tis no Scandal to embrace my Nephew.

*Phil.* Is Mr. Cunningham your Nephew, Madam ?

*Pru.* Yes forsooth that he is.

*Phil.* If he be your Nephew, then he is my Cousin, and I ought to embrace him too, and bid him welcome.

*Cun.* My dearest Cousin ?

*Lady.*

Lady. Hold, Sir, you embrace her very hard :  
Why have you left the Company so very soon ?

Phil. Truly, Madam, I follow'd your Instructions,  
and was afraid to be seen alone with two Men at the  
same Time : you know what a censorious Age we  
live in.

Lady. Go, get you to your Chamber ; my Nephew  
must stay, for he has some Business with me.

Phil. Your Servant, Cousin.

Cun. I am your's, fair Cousin.

Pru. He's none of your Cousin.

Phil. I know it ; Lovemore came laughing to me,  
and told me all.

Lady. Indeed you spoil her, Sir, with flattering  
her, and telling her she is fair.

Cun. Do you think she believes it Madam ?

Lady. So much that she's grown conceited of her  
Beauty, which is so provoking, I can scarce endure  
her.

Cun. What a foolish Thing a Maid at fifteen is !

Lady. Fifteen ! I assure you, Sir, she's nearer  
Twenty.

Pru. How gracefully she steals from her own Age,  
and adds it to her Niece's ?

Lady. You are Melancholy, Sir ; My Heart's too  
tender long to see you languish ; comfort yourself,  
dear Sir.

Cun. Comfort myself ! with what ?

Lady. The Truth is, this pretended Brother, Sir —

Cun. Ha ! she makes me tremble —

Lady. Is not indeed my Brother —

Cun. 'Sdeath ! I am undone —

Pru. Is not the English Gentleman that has liv'd  
so long in France your Brother, Madam ? You always  
call'd him so.

Lady. I did so, Prue ; but when his Father marry'd  
my Mother, she was a Widow, and he a Widower :  
She had me by her first Husband, and his Father had  
him by his first Wife : We were bred up together ;  
and thence we were call'd Brother and Sister.

Cun. Prudence what shall I do ? (aside to Pru.)  
Enter

*Enter Jeffery.*

*Jeff.* Sir, your Attorney sends you Word, if Order be not speedily taken, you will be non-suited.

*Cun.* No Matter: I have greater Griefs upon me.

*Lady.* Dear Sir, oblige your Friend, and let me know 'em.

*Cun.* Ah, Madam! my Torment is, that Fate, cruel Fate, will not consent that I shou'd be your Husband.

*Lady.* No, Sir, lay not the Blame on Fate: Confess the Truth, and say you do not love me.

*Cun.* Not love you, Madam! *Jeffery* can tell how often he has heard me sigh for you.

*Jeff.* Oh! a thousand Times a Day, Madam.

*Lady.* Why then will you not marry me? Tell me your Reason.

*Cun.* I cannot, Madam.

*Lady.* Why?

*Cun.* Shame will not let me.

*Lady.* Let it be Shame, or what it will, either tell me, or never see my Face more.

*Cun.* Now you are too cruel Madam.—Sirrah, invent something to bring me off. [Aside to Jeffery.

*Jeff.* I, Sir! alas! what is it I shou'd invent?

*Cun.* Dear Madam, spare my Blushes, and let Lovemore tell it for me: If he refuses to discover, I'll take the Confidence to tell it myself; and leave you that I may the better do so. [Exit.

*Lady.* This Man amazes me! Thou knowest this Business, *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* My Master has begun a Lie, and I'll continue it if I can. [Aside.

No, Madam, not half so well as Mr. Lovemore does.

*Lady.* They are Friends; I shall never get the Truth from him: But thou mayest tell me, *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* Yes, and be beaten for't, and then you'll laugh at me.

*Pru.* My Lady will undertake for that.

*Jeff.* Well, Madam, if you'll make my Peace for me.

*Lady.* Upon my Word, I will.

*Jeff.*

Jeff. Pray, mark me, Madam, my Master was affronted by a Gentleman, who fled into *Yorkshire*, for Fear of being call'd to an Account for't: Thither my Master follow'd, and to prevent Discovery, chang'd his Name: We call'd him *Monfieur Bouleville*: In a few Days, he was so fortunate, (or rather so unfortunate) to meet his Enemy: They fought, my Master was wounded, and his Enemy left dead upon the Place: We (to avoid the Search that was made for us) fled for Sanctuary to a Viscount's Castle.

Lady. Prithee, go on—

Jeff. The Viscount was gone a Journey, but his Sister, who commanded in his Absence, very kindly received my Master; with this Lady he convers'd daily; sometimes they met at Nights too: In fine, my Master play'd the Fool, for the young Lady was got with Child, by whom, it was no Matter.

Lady. You said, 'twas by your Master.

Jeff. The Truth is, I think he did not hinder it: Well, my Master grew jealous of her, and watching one Night, got a Servant in Bed with her: Enrag'd at this, he stole away privately, and took no Leave of any one: Soon after, the Lady's Brother return'd, the Viscount *Sans Terre*—

Pru. The Viscount *Sans Terre*! he is here in the House, Jeffery.

Jeff. Then my poor Master's lost: Be Judge yourself, Madam, if he does marry, or trust any one with so important a Secret, when this *Sans Terre* has sworn *Bouleville* shall die a thousand Deaths, Hanging at his Castle-Gate, is the least that will appeare his Fury.

Lady. At first, I must confess, I was very angry with him for dishonouring a Maid of her Quality: But when I consider'd the receiv'd two Gallants at a Time, she deserved to be forsaken by Mankind. Well, I'll try to make 'em Friends.

Jeff. You'll lose your Time, Madam, for this furious Viscount never changes his Resolution.

Enter Merryman.

Lady. Here he is: I'll try what I can do with him.

F

Jeff.

*Jeff.* You had best, Madam, speak with my Master first.

*Lady.* Trust me, I'll say nothing shall injure him.

*Jeff.* He'll destroy all I have done; he knows nothing of this; and 'tis impossible to instruct him here.

*Lady.* You are welcome, Sir: I have heard that Men in Love, are very tender-hearted; do you find yourself so, my Lord?

*Mer.* Why do you ask?

*Lady.* Because I mean to make a Tryal of it.

*Jeff.* Have a Care what you say—*Bouteville* hang'd for defaming your Sister. [Aside to Merryman.

*Mer.* Enough—Now for my fair Widow—What wou'd you have me do?

*Lady.* There is one Monsieur *Bouteville*—

*Mer.* Yes, Lady, he was hang'd for—

*Pru.* He deserves it, my Lord, for affronting a Man of your Quality.

*Mer.* Ah, Madam! had you seen the Rascal swing—

*Pru.* Woe be to him, if ever your Lordship takes him.

*Mer.* That's right, if ever I catch the Villain—he shall swing—he shall swing like a Boy at a Bell Rope.

*Lady.* Nay, I beseech your Lordship—

*Mer.* Pray, Madam, give me Leave.—Shall I suffer an impudent hectoring Fellow to call my Sister Whore?

*Pru.* Nay, worse, my Lord; to make a Whore of her?

*Mer.* That's right again—make my Sister a Whore! I'll hang the Rogue for it, at Tyburn.

*Pru.* I fear your Power does not extend so far: But, if your Lordship had him at your Castle in the North—

*Mer.* True—if I catch him there—I'll hang the Whoremaster at my Castle Gate.

*Jeff.* This impudent dull Rogue will ruin all. [Aside.

*Mer.* What damn'd Story has the Rascal told her? If ever I find him, tho' there be no more *Boutevilles* of

of the Family, I'll rip his Heart up : Nay—never stare so—I will do it, Madam.

*Lady.* Nay, now my Lord you are too furious.

*Mer.* Infamous Woman ! I never think of her, but she makes me faint—hold me Friend, or I shall swoon—(*leans on Jeffery, and speaks low.*) Tell me in my Ear, what I must do.

*Lady.* Run *Prue*, and fetch some Mirabilis from my Closet.

*Mer.* Let her stay, Madam ; I shall quickly be well again.

*Pru.* I see Men that are nobly born, resent such Injuries much worse, than meaner Persons.

*Lady.* All young Wenches are troublesome Creatures, *Prue*.

*Pru.* True, Madam ; and the sooner you dispose of your Niece, 'twill be the better, Madam.

*Lady.* No haste there *Prue* ; I'll marry first myself.

*Mer.* So, now I understand you perfectly—[*Aside.* Pardon, dear Madam, this Disorder in me ; Grief for my Sister's Shame, took away my Speech.]

*Lady.* Let me have the Honour to accommodate this Business ; pray my Lord, let me.

*Mer.* How, Madam ! do you think I can forgive a Fellow, that came like a Thief into my House, and robb'd my Sister of her Honour ? A Sister, that was the very Cream ; nay, the Sister of Sisters ; and when he had done her Busineſs, to turn his Bum upon her ? No, I'll cut his Throat, tho' there be no more *Boutevil's* in the Nation.

*Lady.* You have told me, Sir, you lov'd me, now I'll try it ; give me this Gentleman's Life, and I'll believe you.

*Mer.* Who the Devil in half a Day's Time, cou'd give you an Account of his Birth, and his Country ?

*Lady.* That's all one ; Sign his Pardon, my Lord, and then you shall know all.

*Mer.* Well, if you will contract yourself before good Witnesses, to marry the Viscount *Sans Terre*, whenever I call for ye, I'll pardon him ; without this Widow, I'll agree to nothing.

*Lady.*

*Lady.* You ask too little, for so great a Favour; I will do more my Lord, for you; my Niece is young, and rich; you shall have her, I give her to you, Sir.

*Mer.* And I return her to you again——No; I'll have none of her, I love my Honour better.

*Lady.* My Niece, my Lord, is virtuous; she has been strictly-bred, and does not live as wanton Women do.

*Mer.* That's all one to me——'tis you I have a Mind to.

*Lady.* What if I do not love your Lordship?

*Mer.* And what if I do not Love your wanton Niece?

*Lady.* You shall have ten thousand Pounds with her, immediately, and all I have beside when I am dead.

*Mer.* Your Servant, Lady Laycock——there's no catching old Birds with Chaff.

*Lady.* Since you are so provoking, I must tell you, whatever your Birth is, you have not been bred like a Gentleman.

*Mer.* How ridiculous 'tis to see a Woman so very pert at Fifty!

*Lady.* Fifty! Away rude Man.

*Pru.* You are very uncivil, my Lord, to say so; I assure you my Lady is not Thirty.

*Jeff.* Let 'em alone, they'll fall to downright scolding presently.

*Mer.* You hope to get an old Gown by flattering her, or else you are brib'd by Cunningham, to speak for him, and feign would fob me off, with the giggling Niece; somebody shall pay for this Affront: *Beautie-wid* lurks here abouts; I shall find the Rascal, I'll be the Death of him.

*Lady.* Ah, *Pru!* what shall I do to avoid this dreadful Storm?

*Pru.* You are in Danger now to loose 'em both.

*Lady.* Poor Cunningham! unfortunate every Way.

*Pru.* Shou'd he leave the House in this Passion, Madam, Heaven knows what Mischief he may do: I'll stop him if I can——My Lord, the Company

you

you invited to a Ball are coming in: Tho' your Lordship is angry with my Lady, I beseech you be not rude to them.

*Mer.* Well, I'll suppress my Fury for a while; but when the Ball is done, Woe be to somebody.

*Enter Sir Peter, Lady Pride, Cunningham, Philadelphia, Lovemore, Mrs. Brittle, Damaris and Clodpole.*

*Mer.* Ladies and Gentlemen, you are welcome; pray seat yourselves; let the Fiddles strike up and begin the Ball.

*Wife.* I will not fail to come when he's asleep.

[*Aside to Lovemore.*

(When they have danced some Time Brittle enters.)

*Brit.* Hey Day! What the Devil's to do here! my House is made a meer Musick Booth; come, Mistress, you have frisk'd enough; 'tis Time for modest Wives to be a'Bed.

*Lady P.* 'Tis late, we'll take our Leaves of your Ladyship.

*Sir P.* Your Servant, Gentlemen; Ladies I kiss your Hands.

*Lady P.* Nay, you must stay a while, and take a Part of a little Banquet: Pray my Lord, do me the Favour to lead my Sister; come Gentlemen.

*Mer.* Hold there, I will not part with you; I have too Hands, Madam, and can lead you both.

*End of the fourth A C T.* [Exeunt.]

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A C T V. S C E N E I.

*Enter Cunningham, Jeffery, and Philadelphia.*

*P H I L A D E L P H I A.*

**B**UT are we safe here, Jeffery!

*Jeff.* Never doubt it, Madam; Mr. Brittle and his Wife are gone to Bed, and your Aunt's at the farther End of the House in her own Lodgings, busy with the Viscount; trust me, you are secure.

*Phil.* Now I must chide you, sir; to put a false Viscount on my Aunt, Sir, was too much.

*Cun.* Alas, Madam ! I had no other way to free myself from the Trick you put upon me, when you told her I was in Love with h<sup>r</sup>; and I was beholden to *Tom Lovemore* for contriving it.

*Phil.* 'Tis very pleasant to hear *Prudence* persuading her, 'twill be the most generous thing that ever Woman did to marry this Viscount, and preserve your Life; she seems inclined to it. But, what do you think she will do when she discovers she is cheated by you!

*Cun.* She shall not be cheated, Madam ; just now I receiv'd a Letter from the true Viscount; she cannot dislike his Person, for he's a handsome, honest, pleasant Gentleman, and will be here in two Days at the farthest.

*Phil.* But are you sure the Viscount will like her ?  
*Cun.* She's Rich, and he is much in Debt, if he finds Money, he'll dispense with her Age and Beauty, Madam ; he promises whatever I engage for him, he'll stand to.

*Phil.* What Noise is that ?

*Enter Lovemore, Merryman,  
Boy with a Flambeau.*

*Lov.* May I beseech your Lordship.

*Mer.* Never tell me, Sir ; I'll not stay to be affronted thus, do you think I'll suffer an old ill bred Woman, to Capitulate with a Man of my Quality ? No, I'll be the Death of that Son of a Whore, *Bouteville*. Sirrah, go on.

*Boy.* To your Lodging my Lord ?

*Mer.* No, light me to the Devil Tavern—go. *(Exit.)*

*Cun.* What's the Matter, *Tom* ?

*Lov.* The Business is quite off again.

*Phil.* That's very unlucky — what occasion'd it ?

*Lov.* Madam, when our Viscount swore he had hir'd Villians to Murder *Bouteville*, if he refus'd to marry his Sister ; *Prudence*, and I, persuaded her at last, to give herself to this furious Lord, rather than endanger your sweet Life.

*Cun.* I thank you, Sir.

*Lov.*

*Lowe.* But when he declar'd his Jealousy of you; and told her 'twas not enough to marry him to herself, unless she gave her Niece to Mr. Cunningham, she fell into a Passion, vowing she wou'd not be impos'd upon; this broke the Treaty off, and made the angry Lord fly away in a Huff,

*Phil.* Peace, who comes here?

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* Where are you Mr. Cunningham?

*Cun.* Prudence?

*Pru.* Yes, Sir; is Philadelphia there?

*Phil.* I am—what's the News Prudence?

*Pru.* Oh! Madam! Can you hear it patiently?

*Phil.* Yes, let me know the worst.

*Pru.* I have not the Heart to tell you.

*Lowe.* Out with it Woman.

*Pru.* Oh, 'tis too dreadful, Sir! Your Aunt has no way to appease the Vicount's Fury, but by marrying him herself, and giving you, Madam, to Mr. Cunningham, at last she consented to it; —— What say you, are you able to endure this Thunder-Clap?

*Phil.* Beslrew your Heart; you frighted me extremely.

*Lowe.* There's but one Way to take away the fright.

*Pru.* What's that?

*Lowe.* The fright of a little *Lewit* that has taken Orders, recovers 'em I warrant you.

*Pru.* That Care is taken, Sir, I do not do my Business, Sir, by halves.

*Pru.* Pray Mr. *Pride*, that must be, go to your Chamber, and stay till you are call'd for; should your Aunt, have the least Suspicion of you, we are all undone.

*Phil.* That's true——your Servant, Gentlemen.

(*Exit.*)

*Cun.* Prudence, how am I oblig'd to thee?

*Pru.* Did I not tell you, Time and Resolution wou'd overcome all Difficulties? But I hear my Lady—— fall to your Complaints, Sir.

*Cun.* Must I loose her, then? And can I outlive the thought of it.

*Pru.*

*Pru.* Good Sir, be not so much afflicted.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Cun.* How! not afflicted? *Prudence?* Shall she sacrifice herself to perserve me? and ought not I—

*Lady.* Yes, Mr. Cunningham, rather than hazard your Life, I have consented to marry him I hate: Ah, Sir! tho' the Lady were beautiful, you should have been more discreet, than to have given way to such unlawful Love —

*Cun.* Alas, Madam! there was no body but an old Aunt, almost Bed-rid, to look after this young fair Lady: She was kind, and I was not Marble, Madam: and had I not surpriz'd that Fellow with her, I had marry'd her, so tenderly I lov'd her: That now, I'll die a thousand Deaths before I consent to it.

*Lady.* Perhaps a good round Sum of Money, Sir, will end this Busines: You know he is poor.

*Cun.* I offered to beggar myself to do it; but nothing but marrying her, will satisfy him.

*Lady.* Since cruel Heaven, will not consent, that I shall be your Wife, 'twill be some Pleasure to have you allied to me: You shall marry my Niece, if you can like her, Sir.

*Enter Clodpole.*

*Clod.* Sir, Mrs. Damaris, bid me tell you, if you can get away the Company, her Mistress will come hi her to you instantly.

*Cun.* If I must be depriv'd of you, I cannot think of another, Madam.

*Love.* Nay, Friend, you are too obstinate, the Viscount, Madam, is at the Devil Tavern: If you please to retire into your Chamber, I'll go to him, and try what I can work him to: I am impatient 'till see the end of this Busines, Madam.

*Lady.* We both, Sir, are oblig'd to you. Will you bear me Company 'till your Friend returns?

*Cun.* I'll wait upon you, Madam.

[*Exit* *Laycock*, and *Cunningham*.]

*Clod.* Is not the Night very unkind, Sir, to be so dark?

*Love.* Quite contrary; it hinders me, *Clodpole*,

*Clod.*

*Clod.* That's right: But how comes it to be so dark?

*Love.* Thou art very inquisitive.

*Clod.* If I had been a Scholar, I shou'd have thought of Things, that never had been thought on, Sir, before.

*Love.* I believe so, for thou talk'st now like a Philosopher. Is *Damaris* very kind to thee?

*Clod.* I am, Sir —

*Love.* Hush! I hear 'em coming. *Clodpole.*

*Enter Wife, and Damaris.*

*Wife.* *Damaris* —

*Dam.* Madam.

*Wife.* Leave the Door half open:

*Dam.* I have so, Madam.

*Love.* Where are you, my fair Mistress?

*Wife.* Here, Mr. Lovemore.

*Love.* Let me kiss this pretty Hand of yours.

*Wife.* Now we are safe; my Husband is asleep, Sir.

*Love.* Let us retire into the next Porch, Madam; there we shall have more Convenience.

*Wife.* Lead me, Sir, come *Damaris*.

[*Exit Wife, Lovemore, and Damaris.*

*Clod.* *Damaris!* Where art thou *Damaris*?

*Enter Britt.*

*Britt.* I heard my Wife steal softly down the Stairs, and got my Cloaths on as fast as I could, and follow'd her: Where can the Baggage be?

*Clod.* Why *Damaris*, I say — O! art thou there? Thy Mistress says her Husband's very safe, — he snores like any Devil; he little thinks his Wife and Mr. Lovemore are together now; I'd give a Crown to hear what the Cuckold dreams of; certainly 'twou'd be worth laughing at; for my Part, I think my Master does him too much Honour, and he's an impudent Fellow to think to keep her only to himself: Why do'ſt thou not speak to me, *Damaris*? Let's follow 'em; and give me thy pretty little Fist that I may kiss it: — Ah, how sweet it is? Methinks I am eating Sugar-Plumbs. — [Britt gives him a slap in the Face.] O fy, what do'ſt thou mean by that? I do not taste this for a Favour.

*Britt.* Who's there!

*Clod.*

*Clod.* No Body, Sir, no Body.

[Exit.]

*Britt.* He is gone; but has informed me who my treacherous Wife is with; once more I'll send for her Parents; I hope I shall convince 'em now, and get their Consents to be divorc'd from her; ho, *Jerremy*

—*Jerremy*—

*Jer.* [Above.] Did you call, Sir?

*Britt.* Yes, come down quickly, Sirrah.

*Jer.* Here I am, Sir, I don't know who cou'd come quicker.

*Britt.* O! are you there?

*Jer.* Yes, Sir — [Half asleep.]

*Britt.* Hift, Sirrah, softly — look you, go to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and tell 'em, I desire they'd come hither, instantly — d'ye hear, *Jerremy*?

*Jerremy!* *Jerremy!* [While Brittle speaks, Jerremy

*Jer.* Sir — [Snoring.] stands half asleep, and nodding.]

*Britt.* Why, where are you, Sirrah?

*Jer.* Here, Sir. [Gapeing.]

*Britt.* O, that's well; I say go immediately to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and give 'em my humble Service, and tell 'em that something has happen'd — (d'ye hear?) and desire 'em to come hither instantly. [As Brittle is speaking, he takes hold of Jerremy's Cap, who falls down, and leaves his Cap in Brittle's Hand.] Ha! Why don't you answer, Sirrah? [strikes under the Cap at his Ear.] *Jerremy.* Why what, is the Devil run away with him? — *Jerremy!* —

*Jer.* Here, Sir. [On the Ground.]

*Britt.* Here, you Rascal! If I come to you, I'll — [offering to go tumbles over him.] Oh damn'd Rogue! he has murder'd me. Sirrah, come hither, or I'll beat you to death.

*Jer.* Ay, but won't you beat me if, I do?

*Britt.* Come hither, I tell you.

*Jer.* Um — but you'll beat me.

*Britt.* O this provoking Dog! I tell you I won't beat you, Booby.

*Jer.* Ah! but won't you, indeed?

*Britt.* I won't indeed — O senseless Cur! — Come nearer — go to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and

pray

pray 'em to come hither instantly ; tell 'em it is a Busines of the greatest Importance to me in the World : If you find them unwilling, desire 'em to come this once and I'll ne'er trouble 'em more —  
d'ye hear ?

*Jer.* Yes, Sir, I am gone.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Lovemore, Wife, Clodpole and Damaris.*

*Britt.* Who comes here ? O ! 'tis my hopeful Wife and her Gallant. I'll make use of the darkness of the Night, and hear what 'tis they say.

*Wife.* I must begone ; my Husband may wake and miss me.

*Love.* Will you leave me so soon ?

*Wife.* We have had Discourse enough for the first Time.

*Love.* I have not told you half I had to say.

*Wife.* Farewell ; another Time you shall tell me.

*Love.* When I consider you leave me to go to your Husband, it distracts me ; the Privilege a Husband has is Death to any Lover, Madam.

*Wife.* Are you so weak to be disturbed at that ! Do you think all Women love their Husbands, Sir ? We often depend on Parents, who mind nothing but Wealth, they force us to obey 'em, and marry whom they please, not whom we love ; but commonly we are even with 'em, for we use 'em as they deserve.

*Britt.* Ah, poor Husbands ! what slippery Devils do we take into our Bosoms ?

*Love.* He is not worthy to be your Husband, Madam ! 'Twas Cruelty to marry you to so mean a Fellow ; Heaven never meant you for a Citizen's Wife.

*Britt.* If Heaven had made her thine, thou wouldst have had thy Belly full : I have heard enough — I'll in.

[*Exit.*]

*Dam.* If you have any more to say of your Husband, Madam, dispatch, for 'tis late.

*Love.* Now thou art cruel, *Damaris.*

*Wife.* I must be gone : Farewell, Sir.

*Love.* Since you will have it so, I must obey ; but I beseech you, Madam, consider what Torments I endure, that I must leave you.

*Clod.*

*Clod.* Where art thou *Damaris*?

*Dam.* I am here; farewell.

*Love.* I'll now go to my Viscount at the Tavern—  
follow me *Clodpole*. [Exeunt.

*Wife.* Are they gone *Damaris*?

*Dam.* Yes, Madam.

*Wife.* Let us go in again, and make no Noise.

*Dam.* O Heavens! what shall we do? the Door's  
lockt, Madam.

*Wife.* Lockt! call *Jeremy* to open it—call softly.

*Dam.* *Jeremy*—*Jeremy*—

Brittle above.

*Brit.* *Jeremy*—*Jeremy*—a ha! have I caught  
you my fine Lady Wife? I am glad to see you abroad  
at this Time of the Night sweet Madam.

*Wife.* What hurt is it to take the fresh Air of the  
Evening?

*Brit.* Alas! none in the World; 'tis the properest  
Time you could have chosen for't—to take the  
Air!—No, 'twas rather to take a Heat you Witch  
you: I know your whole Plot Gentlewoman: I  
heard how sweetly you and your impudent Gallant  
sung out my Praife—but, 'tis my Comfort now, I  
shall be reveng'd; I shall now convince your Father  
and Mother that my Complaints were just: Now they  
shall see what a disorderly Life you lead, they'll be  
here presently.

*Wife.* What shall we do now *Damaris*?

*Brit.* A ha! what is your Prompter to Wickednes  
struck dumb? This was an Accident you did not look  
for; I triumph, Madam, now; now I shall bring  
down your Pride, and destroy all your little Artifices:  
Hitherto you manag'd your Roguery so cunningly,  
nothing that I cou'd say wou'd be believ'd; but now  
(thanks to my Stars) all your Plots will be laid open  
to your lasting Shame.

*Wife.* Pray Husband let the Door be open'd for  
me.

*Brit.* No, no; you shall e'en stay there 'till your  
Parents come; they shall see what Hours you keep;  
in the mean Time think of some Trick—can't you  
think

think of some Trick now, to deliver you from thi<sup>s</sup> damnable Adventure? Make 'em (if you can) believe that I wrong you still; that this nocturnal Pilgrimage was but a Sally to a Neighbour's Labour or so.

*Wife.* No indeed Husband, I'll disguise nothing from you; I'll not defend myself, or deny any thing.

*Brit.* Ah! 'tis because you have no Hope to invent any thing that will be now believ'd.

*Wife.* I confess I'm to blame; you have Cause to be angry with me; but I beseech you do not expose me to my Parents Fury.

*Brit.* I kiss your Hands, fair Madam.

*Wife.* Dear Husband I beseech you.

*Brit.* Ah! now you are caught, I am your dear Husband, am I? You never us'd such kind Words to me before.

*Wife.* Trust me, I'll never give you Cause to complain of me again.

*Brit.* You'd as good say nothing—that's all one, farewell.

*Wife.* Pray stay, hear me but one Word before you go.

*Brit.* Well—and pray what have you to say now?

*Wife.* I confess I have been to blame, that all your Complaints were just, I watch'd till you were asleep to meet that Gentleman you speak of: But sure, you may pardon little Failings in one so young as I am, that has scarce seen any Thing of the World; that may fall into a Frailty, and yet think no harm.

*Brit.* In good Time—"Twou'd be a notable Proof of my Charity, indeed, should I believe you.

*Wife.* I do not say I am altogether guiltless, I only pray you to forget a Fault I heartily repent of, and ask your Pardon for. If you grant me this; you'll gain more upon me than all my Parents Anger, or the Bonds of Marriage can ever have power to do; in a Word, it shall make me renounce all Company and Courtship, nay, you shall find me the most obedient Wife in the whole World—I protest, Dear, 'tis you, and only you I love.

*Brit.* Ah ! wheedling Crocodile.

*Wife.* Will you not believe me, then ?

*Brit.* No.

*Wife.* Sweet Husband, be so good-natured to me.

*Brit.* No.

*Wife.* Let me intreat you.

*Brit.* No.

*Wife.* As you love Heaven.

*Brit.* No ! I'll have the World see what you are.

*Wife.* If you make me desperate, know a Woman  
in that Condition, is capable of doing any Thing.

*Brit.* Ha, ha, ha ! What will your sweet Lady-  
ship do ?

*Wife.* That which you may repent of ; I'll kill  
myself with this Knife, if you deny me. (*holding  
her Fan like a Dagger.*)

*Brit.* Very good —

*Wife.* 'Twill not be so good as you imagine nei-  
ther ; every one knows how ill we have liv'd toge-  
ther : When I am dead no one will doubt but that  
you were my Murderer ; my Parents will never let  
my Death go unrevenge'd ; they will pursue you with  
all Severity, that Law or Friends will suffer 'em, con-  
sider of it ; I am not the first Wife, that has kill'd  
herself to be reveng'd of a cruel hard-hearted Huf-  
band.

*Brit.* O ! your Servant, killing one's self has been  
long out of Fashion, Madam.

*Wife.* Assure yourself, I'll do it, if you persist in  
your Refusal, and don't open the Door immediately.

*Brit.* Adad, I'll trust you : I shall not be frighted  
with this Trick.

*Wife.* If you 'scape the Law, my Ghost shall haunt  
you for it.

*Brit.* Ah ! if I were but rid of your Person now,  
I shou'd not much fear your Ghost hereafter.

*Wife.* I am just doing it.

*Brit.* It may be so ; but yet, methinks, you are a  
plaguy while about it.

*Dam.* Hold, Madam — you cannot be in earnest.

*Brit.* No, no, I warrant her.

*Wif.*

*Wife.* Stand off, I'll kill thee else—there—

*Dam.* Ah, she has don't—she has don't—

*Wife.* So—now you find too late, I did not jest; you can witness *Damaris*, who was my Murderer; commend me to my Parents; tell 'em my last Request is, that they will see my Death reveng'd upon my cruel Husband.

*Dam.* She's gone! she's gone! O jealous Monster! to murder so sweet a Creature! I'll to her Father and Mother instantly; my Witness will be enough to hang you; you were the Cause of her Death; and I may with a safe Conscience swear 'twas you that did it.

*Brit.* All's very still: Is it possible she can be so malicious to kill herself only to have me hang'd? I'll light a Candle and come down immediately. (*comes down.*)

*Wife. Damaris.*

*Dam.* Madam.

*Wife.* Come hither, and stand up close by me.

*Enter Brittle with a Light.*

(As he enters they slip in and shut the Door.)

*Brit.* Can a Woman's Wickedness extend so far, to murder herself, and damn her Soul, only to be reveng'd on me? Ah! here's no Body: I might have believ'd this at first, when the cunning Quean found neither Prayers nor Threats wou'd work upon me, she ran away: Better and better still; this will convince her Parents with a Vengeance, and render her odious to the whole World—Ha! how the Duke came this Door lock'd? Open the Door there quickly.

*Wife and Damaris above.*

*Wife.* Away you drunken Sot, get you to the Tavern from whence you came; is this an Hour to come home in? Is this a Life for an honest Man to lead?

*Brit.* How's this! have you—

*Wife.* Go, go, base Man; I am weary on't; I'll endure it no longer; I'll complain to my Father and Mother on't.

*Brit.* Have you the Impudence to say all this to my very Face?

*Enter Jeremy with a Paper Lantborn; Sir Peter and Lady under an Umbrella.*

*Wife.* I beseech you, Sir, and you, dear Madam, to come hither, and do me Justice on a Husband, whom Jealousy and Wine have quite distracted; he neither knows what he does, nor what he says; he has sent for you himself to witness the greatest Piece of Extravagance that ever yet was heard of: There he stands, just now come from the Tavern, Madam: How many Nights do I fit up for him?

*Brit.* Was there ever such a Devil!

*Wife.* If you hearken to him, he'll tell you he's the most injur'd Man in the whole City: That whilst he slept, I stole away from him to meet a Gentleman; and a thousand idle Stories of the same Nature, Sir.

*Dam.* Yes, Madam; he would fain have made us believe that he was in the House, and we abroad: This Folly he's so strangely possess'd with, you can hardly now beat it out of his Head.

*Lady P.* 'Tis the strangest Impudence in the whole World, to call us out of our Beds at this Time of the Night.

*Brit.* I must confess I never saw so much Impudence before.

*Sir Pet.* What is your Meaning, Son, to use us thus?

*Wife.* O! my dear Father, I'm weary of my Life, and can no longer endure such a wicked Husband; my Patience is tir'd, he has said a thousand injurious Things to me beside.

*Sir Pet.* Troth, Son, you're a very unworthy Fellow: Do not anger me any more—Do not I say.

*Dam.* Truly, Sir, 'tis a Shame to see a pretty Gentlewoman used thus; All the Neighbours take Notice on't, nay, it calls to Heaven for Vengeance on him:

*Brit.* Can I endure all this? Pray, Sir, hear me but speak two Words.

*Wife.* Pray hear him, Sir.

*Dam.* He has drank so much, no Body can endure him: Methinks I smell him hither.

*Brit.*

*Brit.* I shall run mad—Father-in-law, I conjure you.

*Sir Pet.* Stand farther off—You smell of Wine  
most intollerably.

*Brit.* Madam, shall I entreat you—

*Lady P.* Out upon him; his Breath's infectious:  
'tis enough to make one sick—

*Brit.* Let me but tell you, only—

*Sir Pet.* Keep farther off, I say, I can't endure  
you.

*Brit.* Pray, Madam, give me Leave—

*Lady P.* Away, away, your Breath, Son, turns  
my Stomach.

*Brit.* Well then, if you'll hear me, I'll stand farther off—I swear to you, I have not been out of my House To-night, nor three Minutes out of my Bed:  
'Twas she that was abroad.

*Wife.* Now, Madam, did not I tell you he'd say  
this before?

*Dam.* You see what Likelihood there is of this?

*Brit.* I call all the Stars to witness I was in my  
House—and that—

*Lady P.* Hold your Tongue — Your Folly's insupportable.

*Brit.* May I be Thunder struck immediately, if I  
were out of my House.

*Sir Pet.* Come, trouble us no more; but ask her  
Pardon.

*Brit.* I ask her Pardon!—

*Lady P.* Yes, you, and presently you were best—

*Brit.* What, she offends, and I must ask—

*Sir Pet.* Do not expostulate with me, lest you re-  
pent it.

*Brit.* Ah! *Barnaby Brittle*, what hast thou brought  
thyself to?

*Lady P.* Daughter, come down.

*Sir Pet.* Make Haste, that your Husband may ask  
your Pardon before we go.

*Lady P.* I'll pull down your stubborn Heart—I'll  
teach you what it is to abuse a Gentlewoman so.

*Enter Wife and Damaris.*

Come, Clown, and ask your Wife Forgiveness quickly.

*Wife.* Shall I forgive him, Madam? No; 'tis impossible! I desire to be divorc'd from him.

*Sir Pet.* Daughter, such Separations are scandalous: Tho' he's so foolish to desire it, yet you ought to be wiser, Child: Have Patience, and try him once again.

*Wife.* After so many Affronts, can I endure him longer?

*Sir Pet.* You must: I command you do it.

*Wife.* That stops my Mouth: Your Power is absolute.

*Dam.* Sweet-natur'd Creature.

*Wife.* You see all that he does is by Constraint: But whatever Force I use upon myself, I'm resolv'd I will obey you, Sir.

*Dam.* Innocent Lamb.—

*Sir Pet.* Come, Son.—

*Wife.* All you can do is to no Purpose, Sir; To-morrow he'll do the same again.

*Sir Pet.* I'll take Order for that:—Come, Son, kneel down.

*Brit.* How! kneel?

*Sir Pet.* Yes, kneel, and quickly too —

*Brit.* O Torment, what must I say?

*Sir Pet.* Madam, I beg your Pardon.

*Brit.* How! Madam?

*Lady P.* Yes, Madam—is she not a Gentlewoman?

*Brit.* Then, Madam, I beg your Pardon.—

*Sir Pet.* For the Folly I committed—

*Brit.* For the Folly I committed—in marrying you.

*Sir Pet.* I promise you hereafter I'll lead a better Life.

*Brit.* I promise you hereafter I'll lead a better Life.

*Wife.* Well, Husband, do so then, and I freely pardon you your first Fault.

*Sir Pet.* Take Notice this is the last Time we'll endure your Impertinence.

*Lady P.* If you return to your Folly, you shall be taught your Duty to such a Wife; and what Respect you ought to pay to the Quality of her Parents.

*Wife.* Come, Dear, give me your Hand, we will be friends.

*Dam.*

Dam. O Miracle of Goodness!

Wife. 'Twill be to no Purpose to turn Haggard again; if you do in Time I shall make you tame.

Brit. Well, I must endure it; or if I will be free, I must either hang or drown myself.

Enter Cunningham, *Lady Laycock, and Prudence.*

Lady P. Look, if the Noise you made has not brought down my Sister *Laycock*: I fear we have disturbed your Ladyship.

Lady. What's the Matter?

Lady P. Here has been a little Difference between my Daughter and her Husband; but Thanks to Heaven, Madam, now all's well.

Enter Merryman, Lovemore, Clodpole and Jeffery.

Love. With much Importunity, Madam, I have brought my Lord back again.

Mer. Yes, Madam, I am come once more to end this foolish Business; do you consent to what I last propos'd?

Lady. Yes, Sir, you shall have all you desir'd of me.

Mer. O! are you there? You thought to have snapt her, did you?

Cun. I confess, my Lord, I love her; nor shou'd you make such an easy Conquest, did she not bind my Hands.

Mer. What the Devil ails you? Are you not pleas'd that I make you my Nephew, Sir?

Cun. No, my Lord, when you take from me all I love.

Lady. Why, will you not marry her, my Lord? and leave me to Mr. Cunningham? You see what a Passion he has for me.

Mer. And don't I shew greater Passion for you, who have been offer'd so many thousand Pounds to be Friends with *Bouteville*? Yet, at your Request, I do it gratis.

Lady. May I not justly doubt you, when you told me to my Face, I was both old and ugly?

Mer. I did but jest when I said so: You shall call me what you please; and when I'm merry, I must have

have Leave to say any Thing to you. Go, *Prudence*, get my Niece.

[Exit.]

*Lady.* Well, Mr. Cunningham, since there's no Remedy, for my Sake, marry her.

*Love.* Nay, Jack, you must consent, since my Lady desires it of you.

*Cun.* How, if your Niece, Madam, will not consent to it?

*Lady.* I'll answer for her, she dare not refuse what I command her.

*Enter Philadelphia and Prudence.*

*Merr.* Come hither my pert Niece, and let me see how obedient you can be to your Aunt.

*Lady.* My Lord has taken Care to provide a Husband for you *Philadelphia*.

*Merr.* Yes my pretty little smirking Rogue; come make me a Courtefy and give me Thanks.

*Pbil.* I am too young, to marry yet, my Lord.

*Pru.* You'll make your Aunt angry with you; give him your Hand, since she'll have it so.

*Lady.* Foolish Girl, not to know when she's well.

*Phil.* Well, Sir, I give you my Hand, but cannot promise to love you.

*Merr.* That you'll quickly learn, if you give your Mind to it; however he shall venture it, Madam, it will require a Day or two, to put myself into an Equipage fit for my Quality: Our Marriage shall be deferr'd till then. But theirs shall be dispatch'd immediately.

*Cun.* Had I not best tell her the whole Truth now?

(Aside)

*Love.* No, no, 'twill spoil our Mirth, stay 'till the true Viscount comes; it cannot be properly done 'till then.

*Cun.* Now, Madam, I have a request to you.

*Lady.* Concluded, granted, Sir.

*Cun.* Jeffery loves *Prudence*, Madam, and hopes you will not oppose it.

*Lady.* What say you to it, *Prudence*.

*Pru.* If he'll promise not to be jealous, Madam.

*Jeff.* If you'll engage never to give me Cause.

*Pru.*

*Pru.* Well I will marry you ; and promise, if I find you troublesome ; you shall not be jealous without a Cause.

*Clod.* *Damaris.*

*Dam.* Well.

*Clod.* Shall not we Couple too ? You understand me. —

*Dam.* You'll have me into the Country, and my Lady will not be willing to part with me.

*Love.* What say you, Madam *Brittle*? If you'll command *Damaris* to honest *Clodpole*, I'll settle 'em in a good living, Madam.

*Wife.* If you are willing Husband, I'll consent to it.

*Brit.* I, I, with all my Heart, and more ; I'll give a sum of Money to be rid of her.

*Dam.* Come, *Clodpole*, 'tis a Bargain.

*Clod.* There's my Hand on't.

*Merr.* Me thinks, Sir, you that are so busy to couple others, want a Mate yourself : — Shall I provide for you ?

*Love.* I will not give your Lordship so much Trouble : I'll say this in the praise of little *London* ; I never wanted a handsome Mistress here, but when I wanted Money.

*Cun.* Prithee leave thy wild Way of Love, and marry *Tom*.

*Love.* I thank you for your Advice ; but I think I am better as I am : I know not what Difference there is in our Way of Love ; I am sure there is little in the End.

*Wife.* Say you so ? I find 'tis his business to Debauch young Women. *(Aside.)*

*Love.* Romantick *Love*, is almost out of Fashion, *Jack*, fine Speeches, and much Courtship, are not baits for the Lady's now-a-days ; 'tis now, not who Loves most, but gives most, catches pretty Women.

*Wife.* Fortune has been very kind to me ; I have had fair warning, and will tempt her fickle Ladyship no more. — Well Dear, if you'll forgive all my

• 2      *The Amorous Widow, &c.*

my past Faults, henceforth, I'll never give you Cause  
to be Jealous of me more.

*Brit.* I must believe thee ; tho' you have jilted  
e so often, you may well excuse me, if I doubt it.

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.* Madam the Parson's come.

*Mer.* That's well ; bid my Servants strike up,  
we'll go merrily to this Business. [A Dance.]

*Cun.* Take my Word, *Merryman*, the Viscount  
shall make you a good present, for acting his Part so  
well.

*Merr.* I thank you, Sir ; so every one take  
his Mistress by the Hand, we'll lead to the Parson :  
our Marriage Dear, must be a while deferr'd ; theirs  
shall be dispatch'd immediately.

*Love* Pray tell me one Thing, Gallants ; since all  
your Wedding Days are to be together, why shou'd  
the merry Execution be divided ? I've heard of a  
famous Bed wou'd hold you all.

*Merr.* You mean the Bed of Ware —

*What say you ? shall we to the Bed of Ware ?  
I'll stand and give the Word, and then start fair.*



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